

The Barren Fig-tree :

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O R,

The Doom & Downfal
of the *Fruitlefs* Professor.

Shewing, That the Day of Grace
may be past with him long
before his Life is ended.

The Signs also by which such mis-
erable Mortals may be known.

By JOHN BUNYAN.

— *who being dead, yet speaketh, Heb. 11. 4.*

To which is added,

His Exhortation to *Peate* and
Cluety among all that fear God.

L O N D O N;

Printed for J. Robinson, at the Golden
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THE DOOM & DOWNFALL

OF

THE DOOM & DOWNFALL
OF THE PRINCE OF PELOPONNESUS

AND THE HISTORY OF HIS REIGN
AND THE FALL OF HIS KINGDOM

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF THE
REIGN OF THE PRINCE OF PELOPONNESUS

BY JOHN B. GAY

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My Hand reach unto the Clouds, &c.

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To the Reader

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Contemning Reader, &c.

I have written to thee, now about  
the Barren Fig-tree, or how it  
will fare with the Fruitless Pro-  
fessor that standeth in the Vineyard  
of God.

Of what Complexion thou art, I  
cannot certainly divine, but the Pa-  
rable tells thee, that the Cumber-  
ground must be cut down.

A Cumber-ground Professor, is  
not only a provocation to God,  
a stumbling-block to the World, and a  
blemish to Religion, but a snare to  
his own Soul also. Though his Exce-  
lency mount up to the Heavens, and

## To the Reader.

his Head reach unto the Clouds, yet  
he shall perish for ever, like his own  
dung, they that have seen him, shall  
say; Where is he? Job 20. 9.

Now they count it pleasure to riot  
in the day-time, 2 Pet. 2. 13. 14. but  
what will they do when the AX is fetcht  
out?

The Tree whose Fruit withereth, is  
reckoned a Tree without Fruit, & is  
twice dead, one that must be pluckt  
up by the Roots, Jude 12.

O thou Cumber-ground, God ex-  
pects Fruit, God will come seeking  
Fruit shortly.

My Exhortation therefore is to  
Professors, that they look to it, that  
they take heed.

The Barren Fig-tree in the Vine-  
yard, and the Bramble in the Wood,  
are both prepared for the Fire.

Profession is not a Covert to hide  
from the Eye of God; nor will it pre-  
ludicate the revengeful Threatning of his  
Justice, he will command to cut it  
down shortly.

## To the Reader.

The Church and a Profession, are the best of places for the Upright; but the worst in the World for the Cumber-ground. He must be cast, as profane, out of the Mount of God; Cast, I say, over the Wall of the Vineyard; there to wither; thence to be gathered and burned. It had been better for them that they had not known the Way of Righteousness; *1 Pet. 2. 21.* And yet if they had not, they had been damned; but it is better to go to Hell without, than in, or from under a Profession. These shall receive greater Damnation, *Luke 20. 47.*

If thou be a Professor, read and tremble; If thou be Profane, do so likewise. For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and Sinners appear? Cumber-ground, Take heed of the Ax; Barren Fig-tree, beware of the Fire.

But I will keep thee no longer out of the Book; Christ Jesus, the Dresser

## To the Reader.

of the Vine-yard, take care of thee,  
dig about thee, and dung thee, that  
thou mayest bear Fruit: That when the  
Lord of the Vineyard cometh with  
his Ax to seek for Fruit, or pronounce  
the Sentence of Damnation on the  
Barren Fig-tree, thou mayest escape  
that judgment. The Cumber-ground  
must to the Wood-pile, and thence  
to the Fire.

*Farwell.*

Grace be with all them that love  
our Lord Jesus in Sincerity.

**J. Bunyan.**

**The**

the Book: Of the Pilgrim's Progress

**The Warren Fig-tree**

**O R,**

**The Doom and Downfal of  
the fruitless Professor.**

**Luke 13. 6, 7, 8, 9.**

A certain Man had a Fig-tree planted  
in his Vineyard, and he came and  
sought Fruit thereon, and found  
none. Then said he to the Dresser  
of his Vineyard, Behold, these three  
Years I come seeking Fruit on this  
Fig-tree, and find none: cut it  
down, why cumbereth it the ground?  
And he answering, said, Lord, let  
it alone this Year also, until I shall  
dig about it, and dung it: and if  
it bear Fruit, well; and if not,

2 The Batten Fig-tree.

then after that thou shalt cut it down.

**A**T the beginning of this Chapter we read, how some of the *Jews* came to *Jesus Christ*, to tell him of the cruelty of *Pontius Pilate*, in mingling the Blood of the *Galileans* with their Sacrifices. An heathenish and prodigious Act: for therein he shewed, not only his Malice against the *Jewish* Nation, but also against their Worship, and consequently their God. An Action, I say, not only Heathenish, but prodigious also; for the Lord *Jesus* paraphrasing upon this Fact of his, teacheth the *Jews*, that without Repentance, they should all Likewise perish. Likewise, that is, by the Hand and Rage of the *Roman* Empire: Neither should they be more able to avoid the Stroke, than were those *righteous* upon whom the *Tower of Siloam* fell, and slew them, *Luke 19. 42, 43, 44.* The fulfilling of which Prophecy, for their hardness of Heart, and Impenitency, was in the days of *Titus* Son of *Vespasian*, about forty Years after the Death of *Christ*. Then, I say, were these *Jews*, and their City both, environed round



## The Scattered Fig-tree.

round on every side, wherein both they and its amazement, were miserably overthrow. God gave them Sword, and Famine, Pestilence, and Blood, for their outrage against the Son of his Love: So Wrath came on them to the uttermost; Then. 2. 16.

Now to prevent their old and foolish *Sally*, which they always had in readiness against such Prophecies and Denunciations of Judgment, the Lord Jesus presents them with this Parable, in which he emphatically shews them, that their cry of being the Temple of the Lord, and of their being the Children of Abraham, &c. and their being the Church of God, would not stand them in any stead. As who should say, It may be you think to help your selves against this my Prophecy, of your utter and unavoidable overthrow, by the Interest which you have in your outward Priviledges: But all these will fail you; for what think you, A certain Man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought Fruit thereon, and found none. This is your Case, The Jewish Land is God's Vineyard, I know it, and I know also, that you are the Fig-tree. But behold, there



wanteth the main thing, Fruit: for the  
sake, and in expectation of which, he let  
this Vineyard with Trees. Now, seeing  
the Fruit is not found amongst you, the  
Fruit, I say, for the sake of which he  
did at first plant this Vineyard: what re-  
mains, but that in Justice he command  
to cut you down, *as these that cover the  
Ground*, that he may plant himself ano-  
ther Vineyard. Then said he to the Driver  
of the Vineyard, Behold, these three Years  
I come seeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, and  
find none: cut it down, why covereth it the  
Ground? This therefore must be your End,  
altho' you are planted in the Garden of  
God, for the barrenness and unfruitful-  
ness of your Hearts and Lives, you must  
be cut off, yea, rooted up, and cast out  
of the Vineyard. In this Parable there are *two Things* to be  
taken notice of, and to be enquired into  
of them that read.

First, The *Metaphors* made use of.  
Secondly, The Doctrine, or *Metaphors*  
conched under such *Metaphors*.

The *Metaphors* in this Parable are:  
(1.) A certain Man. (2.) A Vineyard.

(3.) A

## The Barren Fig-tree.

5

(3.) A Fig-tree, barren or fruitless.

(4.) A Dresser. (5.) Three Years.

(6.) Digging and Dunging, &c.

The Doctrine, or Mystery, couched under these words, is to shew us, *What is like to become of a fruitless or formal Professor.* For,

1. By the *Man* in the Parable, (Luk. 13. 6.) is meant *God the Father.*

2. By the *Vineyard*, (Ila. 5. 7.) his *Church.*

3. By the *Fig-tree*, a *Professor.*

4. By the *Dresser*, the *Lord Jesus.*

5. By the *Fig-tree's barrenness*, the *Professor's fruitlessness.*

6. By the *three Years*, the *Patience of God*, that for a time he extendeth to barren Professors.

7. This calling to the Dresser of the Vineyard to cut it down, is to shew, the *outcries of Justice against fruitless Professors.*

8. The Dresser's interceding, is to shew, how the Lord Jesus steps in, and takes hold of the Head of his Father's Arm, to stop, or at least to defer present execution a barren Fig-tree.

9. The Dresser's desire to try to make the Fig-tree fruitful, is to shew you,

How

## 6 The Barren Fig-tree.

*How unwilling he is that ever a barren Fig-tree, should yet be barren, and perish.*

10. His digging about it, and dangling of it, is to shew his willingness to apply Gospel-helps to this barren Professor, if happily he may be fruitful.

11. The Supposition that the Fig-tree may yet continue fruitless, is to shew, that when Christ Jesus hath done all, There are some Professors will abide barren and fruitless.

12. The Determination upon this Supposition, at last to cut it down, is a certain prediction of such Professors unavoidable and eternal Damnation.

But to take this Parable into pieces, and to discourse more particularly, tho with all brevity, upon all the parts thereof.

*A certain Man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard.]*

The Man, I told you, is to present us with God the Father, by which Similitude He is often set out in the New-Testament.

Observe then, That it is no new thing, if you find in God's Church,  
*barren*

## The Barren Fig-trees.

7

Barren Fig-trees, fruitless Professors; even as here you see is a Tree, a fruitless Tree, a fruitless Fig-tree in the Vineyard. Fruit is not so easily brought forth, as a Profession is got into; 'tis easy, for a Man to cloath himself with a fair show in the flesh, to word it, and say, Be thou warmed and filled with the best. 'Tis no hard thing to do these with other things; but to be fruitful, to bring forth fruit to God, this doth not every tree; No not every Fig-tree, that stands in the Vineyard of God. These words also, Job. 15. 2. [*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away,*] affect the same thing. There are branches in Christ, in Christ's Body mystical, (which is his Church, his Vineyard) that bear not Fruit, wherefore the Hand of God is to take them away. *I looked for Grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes,* Isa. 5. 4. that is, no fruit at all that was acceptable with God. Again, Hos. 10. 1. *Israel is an empty Vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself, none to God;* he is without Fruit to God. All these, with many more, shew us the truth of the Observation, and that God's Church may

## The Barren Fig-tree.

may be cumbered with fruitless Fig-  
trees, with barren Professors.

### Had a Fig-tree.

Although there be in God's Church  
that be barren and fruitless; yet, as  
I said, so far so, they are like the rest  
of the Trees, even a Fig-tree: I was not  
an Oak, nor a Willow, nor a Thorn, nor  
a Bramble, but a Fig-tree. Ezek. 33. 31.  
They come before thee as the people cometh.  
They delight to know my  
ways, as a Nation that did Righteousness,  
and saw not the Ordinances of their  
God: they ask of me the Ordinances of  
Justice, they take delight in approaching to  
God; and yet but barren, fruitless, and  
unprofitable Professors. Judas also was  
one of the twelve, a Disciple, an Apostle,  
a Preacher, an Officer, yea, and such an  
one as none of the Eleven mistrusted,  
but preferred before themselves, each  
one crying out, Is it I? is it I? Mar. 14.  
Yet none of them, as we read of. (Joh.  
6. 70.) mistrusting Judas, yet he in  
Christ's Eye was the barren Fig-tree, a  
Devil, a fruitless Professor. The foolish  
Virgins

## The Barren Fig-tree.

Virgins also went forth of the World with the other, had Lamps, and Light, and were awakened with the other, year had holidays to go forth when the midnight Cry was made with the other, and thought that they could have looked Christ in the Face, when he sat upon the Throne of Judgment with the others, and yet but *fruitless*, but *barren Fig-trees*, but *fruitless Professors*. *Mat. 7. 22-23.* *Mary, faith Christ, will say unto me in that day, thou art not mine*, and will also talk of many wonderful Works: yet behold, he finds nothing in them, but the *fruitless* of Unbelief; they were altogether barren and *fruitless Professors*.

## Flax & Fig-tree Planted.

This word *Planted* doth also reach far: it supposeth one taken out of its natural Soil, or removed from the place it grew in once; one that seemed to be called awakened: and not only so but by strong hand carried from the World to the Church; from *Nature* to *Grace*; from *Sin* to *Godliness*. *Psal. 80. 8.* *Thou hast brought a Vine out of Egypt; thou didst*

*cast*

10 The Earthen Fig-tree.

Of some branches of this Vine, were there  
many Professors. It may be concluded therefore, That  
this Professor (that remaineth notwithstanding  
fruitless) is, as to the view and  
judgement of the Church, rightly brought  
in thither, to wit, By Confession of  
Faith, of Sin, and a *form of Repentance*  
and Regeneration, (thus false Brethren  
creep in unawares). All these things  
this word, *Planted*, imputeth; yea,  
further, that the Church is satisfied with  
them, contents they should abide in the  
Garden, and counteth them sound as the  
rest. But before God, in the sight of  
God, they are graceless Professors, *barren and fruitless Fig-trees*.

Therefore this one thing to be *in* the  
Church, or in a Profession; and another  
to be *of* the Church, and to belong to  
that Kingdom, that is prepared for the  
Saints, that is so indeed. Otherwise, *as*  
*the fig-tree*, that is *barren*, shall be *cut*  
*down*, when the Lord shall come.  
The Church is to be *of* the Kingdom, and  
the Kingdom is to be *of* the Church.



## The Barren Fig-tree.

31

Had a Fig-tree planted in [his] Vineyard.

In [his] Vineyard. Hypocrites, with rotten Hearts, are not afraid to come before God in *Sion*. These words therefore suggest unto us, a prodigious kind of boldness and hardened Fearlessness: For what presumption higher, and what attempt more desperate, than for a Man that wanteth Grace, and the true Knowledge of God, to croud himself (in that condition) into the House, or Church of God; or to make profession of, and desire that the name of God should be called upon him?

For the Man that maketh a Profession of the Religion of Jesus Christ, that Man hath, as it were, put the Name of God upon himself, and is called and reckoned now, (how fruitless soever before God, or Men) the Man that hath to do with God, the Man that God oweth, and will stand for. This Man, I say, by his Profession suggesteth this to all that know him, to be such a Professor. Men merely natural, I mean, Men that have not got the devilish art of Hypocrisie, are afraid

## 12 The barren fig-tree.

afraid to think of doing thus. And of  
themselves dash no Man join himself to them,  
but the people magnified them. Act. 5. 13.  
And indeed it displeaseth God, They  
have brought, saith he, Men uncircumcised  
into my Sanctuary. And again, (Isa. i.  
22.) When you come to appear before me,  
who hath required this at your hand, to  
tread my Courts? saith God. They have  
therefore learnt this boldness of none in  
the visible World, they only took it of  
the Devil; for he, and he only (with  
these his Disciples) attempt to present  
themselves in the Church before God.  
The Tares are the Children of the Wicked  
One; the Tares, that is, the Hypocrites  
that are Satan's Brood, the Generation  
of Vipers, that cannot escape the Dam-  
nation of Hell.

[Had] a Fig-tree planted in his King-  
dom.

He doth not say, He planted a Fig-  
tree, but there Was a Fig-tree there, he  
Had, or found, a Fig-tree planted in his  
Vineyard.

The great God will not acknowledg  
the barren Fig-tree, or barren Professor.  
his  
to

to be *His* Workmanship, or a Tree of *his* bringing in; only the Text saith, *He Had one there.* This is much like that in *Matthew, Chap. 15, 13.* Every Plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Here again are Plants in his Vineyard, which God will not acknowledg to be of his planting; and he seems to suggest, that in his Vineyard are many such — Every Plant, or all those Plants, or Professors that are got into the Assembly of the Saints, or into the Profession of their Religion, without God and his Grace, shall be rooted up.

And when the King came in to see the Guests, he saw there a Man that had not on a Wedding-garment; and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a Wedding-garment? *Matth. 22.*

Here is one, so cunning and crafty, that he beguiled all the Guests; he got and kept in the Church, even until the King himself came in to see the Guests. But his subtilty got him nothing; it did not blind the Eyes of the King; it did not pervert the Judgment of the Righteous. Friend, how camest thou in hither? did overtake him at last, even a publick

## The Batten fig-tree.

publick rejection; the King discovered him in the face of all there present. *How camest thou in hither?* My Father did not bring thee hither, I did not bring thee hither, My Spirit did not bring thee hither, thou art not of the Heavenly Father's planting, *How camest thou in hither?*

John 10. 1. *He that cometh not in by the Door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a Thief and a Robber.* This Text also is full, and plain to our purpose, for this Man came not in by the Door, yet got into the Church, he got in by climbing; he broke in at the Windows, he got something of the Light and Glory of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in his Head; and so (hardy Wretch that he was) he presumed to croud himself among the Children. But how is this resented? what saith the King of him? Why this is his Sign, *The same is a Thief and a Robber!* See ye here also, if all they be owned as the planting of God, that get into his Church, or Profession of his Name.

*Had a Fig tree, had one without a Wedding-garment, had a thief in his Garden, at his Wedding, in his House.*

These

## The Barren Fig-tree 15

These climbed up *Some other way*. There are *many ways* to get into the Church of God, and Profession of his Name, besides, and without an entering by the door.

1. There is the way of *lying and dissimulation*, and at *this gap* the *Gibonites* got in; Josh. 9. 3, 4, &c.

2. There is sometimes falseness amongst *some Pastors*, either for the sake of carnal Relations, or the like; at *this hole*, *Tahab* the enemy of God got in; Nehem. 13. 4, 5, 6.

3. There is sometimes *negligence*, and too much uncircumspectness in the whole Church, thus the *Uncircumcised* got in; Ezek. 44. 7, 9, 12.

4. Sometimes again, let the Church be *never so circumspect*, yet *these* have so much help from the Devil, that *they* beguile them all, and so get in. These are of that sort of Thieves that *Paul* complains of; *false Brethren* brought in *unawares*, Gal. 2. 3, 4. *Jude* also cries out of these, *Certain Men crept in unawares*, Jude 4. *Crept in!* What, were they so lowly! A voluntary humility, (Gal. 2. 23, 28.) a neglecting of the Body, not in any humor. Oh, how seemingly self-denying

## 26 The Barren Fig-tree.

denying some of these creeping things, that yet are to be held, (as we shall know them) an abomination to Israel. *Lev. 11. 43, 44.*

But in a great House, there are not only Professors of Gold, and of Silver, but also of Wood, and of Earth; and some to Honour, and some to Dishonour; & *Tim. 2. 20.* By these words the Apostle seems to take it for granted, that as there *hath* been, so there *will* be, these kind of Fig-trees, these barren Professors in the house, when all Men have done what they can; *Even as in a great house there, are always Vessels to Dishonour*, as well as those to Honour and Glory; Vessels of Wood, and of Earth, as well as of Silver and Gold. So then there must be *wooden* Professors in the Garden of God; there must be *earthy*, *earthen* Professors in his Vineyard; but that methinks is the biting word, *and some to Dishonour*. That to the Romans is dreadful, (*Rom. 9. 21, 22.*) but *this* seems to go beyond it; That speaks but of the Reprobate in general, but *this* of such and such in particular. That speaks of their hardening but in the common way; But *this*, that they must be suffered to creep into the Church; There







## 24 The barren fig-tree.

Hath he Life, hath he right Principles, but hath he Fruit, *He came seeking Fruit thereon.* It mattereth not who brought thee in hither, whether God or the Devils, or thine own vain-glorious Heart; But hast thou Fruit? dost thou bring forth Fruit unto God? And, let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, depart from Iniquity, 2 Tim. 2. 19. He doth not say, and let every one that hath Grace, or let those that have the Spirit of God; but let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, depart from Iniquity.

What do Men meddle with Religion for? Why do they call themselves by the Name of the Lord Jesus, if they have not the Grace of God, if they have not the Spirit of Christ? God therefore expecteth Fruit: What do they do in the Vineyard? Let them work, or get them out, the Vineyard must have Labourers in it: Son, go work to day in my Vineyard, Mat. 21. 18. Wherefore, want of Grace, and want of Spirit, will not keep God from seeking Fruit; And He came and sought Fruit thereon, Luke 8. 8. He requirerh that which He seemeth to have: Every Man in the Vineyard, and

House of God, promiseth himself, professeth to others, and would have all Men take it for granted, that an Heavenly Principle is in him; Why then should not God seek Fruit?

As for them therefore, that will retain the Name of Christians, fearing God, and yet make no Conscience of bringing forth Fruit to him: He saith to such, *Away!* As for you, *Go ye, & serve every one his Idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me, &c.* Ezek. 20. 39. Barren Fig-tree, dost thou hear? God expecteth Fruit, God calls for Fruit; yea, God will shortly come seeking Fruit on this Barren Fig-tree. Barren Fig-tree! either bear Fruit, or go out of the Vineyard, (and yet then thy Case will be unspeakably damnable). Yea, let me add, If thou shalt neither bear Fruit, nor depart, God will take his Name out of thy Name, Jer. 44. 26. He will have Fruit. And I say further, If thou wilt do neither, yet God in Justice and Righteousness will still come for Fruit. And it will be in vain for thee to count this *Mystery*; He will reap where he hath not sowed, and gather where he hath not sown.

*From Math. 23. 24. 25. 26. Barren Figure, dost thou hear?*

*Q. What if a Man have no Grace?*

*A. Yes, seeing he hath a Profession.*

*And he came and sought Fruit [there-  
on]*

A Church then, and a Profession, are not places where the workers of Iniquity may hide themselves, and Sins, from God. Some of old thought, that because they could cry, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, that therefore they were delivered, or had a Dispensation to do the Abominations which they committed; as some in our days. For, who (say they) have a right to the Creatures if not Christians, if not Professors, if not Church-Members? And from this Conclusion, let go the Reigns of their inordinate Affections [after] Pride, Ambition, Gluttony, *tempting themselves with unclean lusts*, including themselves with the Lust provoking Fashions of the Times; to walk with stretched-out Necks, naked Breasts,

frizled

But many of these men, who are called  
in the name of Christ, are not  
of the same mind. They will not  
make profession into their lives, their  
carriage, or words, in their countenances  
and secret hearts. But certainly persons  
that professed this principle, and this  
covenant, have but empty thoughts, and  
that want the fruit that God expects,  
and that God will come down to seek.  
They are not, then, authorized  
by His promise, nor by the Lord of  
the vineyard, to be in the Church of  
Christ, neither shall they be  
allowed to be among the  
people, that are from the sight of the  
Eye of God. Many make Religion their  
cloak, and cover their wickedness  
under the name of Christ, and  
say that means cover themselves, and  
hide their own wickedness from men.  
But God will not be deceived, and  
will search out the hearts of men, and  
bring forth all their goings: and I ask when  
their iniquity is found to be bare, will  
God either smite them with hardness  
of heart, and to leave them, or away  
will he bring forth fruit? It will be  
found for, needs and expects, that God  
will call of the eye, and this is the



still be a Church. May, therefore, Church  
and Profession are not places where the  
workers of iniquity may hide themselves  
from God, who seeks for them; *My Vine  
ye have sold, which is made of my  
song.* *Isa. 54. 12.* *There is none of them  
that hath sinned against God, is not  
yet And he came and sought Fruit, but  
found none.*

Barren Fig-tree, hearken; *The con-  
fession bearing of Fruit, is a dreadful  
sue, that shall be a curse to a dreadful  
end, as the winding up of this Parable  
concludeth.* *Isa. 18. 5.* *None at all, or none  
to God's liking. For when he saith, I  
came seeking Fruit, he means Fruit  
meritorious for God, (Heb. 11.) pleasant Fruit,  
Fruit good and sweet.* *Isa. 18. 5.* *Alas, if  
not any Fruit will serve, bad  
Fruit is counted none. Every Tree  
that bringeth forth good Fruit, God will  
leave alone, much more shall the Tree, that  
bringeth forth evil Fruit, be cut down.  
There is a Fruit among Professors  
that withers, and so never comes to be  
ripe, a Fruit that is smitten in the back,  
and comes not to maturity, and this is  
reckoned*



reckoned as Fruit. This Fruit those Professors bear, that have *mean* fair beginnings, or beginnings. That make way for the entrance of the Holy Spirit, that begin to press to overcome, and to break off their Sins by Righteousness; but stop at those beginnings, and hang on, Fruit forth to perfection. This Man's Fruit is withered, wrinkled, mitted Fruit, and is in effect no Fruit at all.

There is an *hasty* Fruit, such as is the Corn upon the *Flank* of the *Flank*, Psal. 149. or that which springs upon the *Dung* that runs up suddenly, violently, with great heat, and big foam, and general provocation of Kernal. The Fruit is to be found in those Professors, that once suddenly are so awakened, so convinced, and so affected with their Condition, that they shake the whole Family, the Church, the whole Town. For which they cry, hastily, vehemently, dolefully, mournfully, and yet all is but a *Passion*, an Agony, a Fit, they bring not forth Fruit with *Patience*. These are called *hasty* Fruits, *that shall be as a fading flower*. *ripe & Fruit that is (withered in the hand)* and comes not to maturity, and this is reckoned



3. There is a Fruit that is *wile*, and *ill-tasted*; *Jer. 23* how long soever it be in growing; the Root is dried, and cannot convey a sufficiency of Sap to the Branches to ripen the Fruits. These are the Fruit of such Professors, whose Heart is estranged from Communion with the Holy Ghost; whose Fruit groweth from themselves, from their Parts, Gifts, strength of Wit, natural or moral Principles. These, notwithstanding they bring forth Fruit, are called *empty Vines*; such as bring not forth Fruit to God. *Job 15* Their Root is dried up, they shall bear no Fruit; yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved Fruit of their Womb, *Hos. 9. 16.*

4. There is a Fruit that is *Wild*; I looked for Grapes, and it brought forth Wild Grapes, *Isa. 5. 4.* I observe, That as there are Trees and Herbs that are wholly right, and noble, fit indeed for the Vineyard. So there are also their Semblance, but wild; not right, but ignoble. There is the Grape, and the wild Grape; the Vine, and the wild Vine; the Rose, and the wild Rose; Flowers, and wild-Flowers; the Apple, and the wild-Apple, which we call the Crab. Now Fruit

from these wild things, & however they may please the *Children* to play with, yet the *Prudens* and *Grown* count them of little or no value. There are also in the World a Generation of Professors, that notwithstanding their Profession, are wild by Nature; yea, such as were never cut out or off, from the wild *Olive-tree*, nor never yet planted into the good *Olive-tree*. Now these can bring nothing forth but *wild Olive-berryes*, they cannot bring forth Fruit unto God. Such are all those that have lightly taken up a Profession, and crept into the Vineyard without a new birth, and the blessing of Regeneration.

5. There is also untimely Fruit; Even as a Fig-tree casteth her untimely Figs, Rev. 6:13. Fruit out of Season, and so no Fruit to God's liking.

There are two sorts of Professors subject to bring forth untimely Fruit.

First, They that bring forth [Fruit]

Secondly, They that bring forth [Fruit]

First,

formed. They that bring forth *Season*.  
They are such as at *profession* receive the  
Word with Joy, and anon, before they  
have Root downwards, they thrust forth  
upwards; but having no root, when the  
Sun ariseth they are withered, and mise-  
rably die without Fruit. These Professi-  
ors are those light and inconsiderate  
Ones, that think nothing but Peace will  
attend the Gospel; and so anon rejoice  
at the Tidings, without foreseeing the  
Evil: Wherefore when the Evil comes,  
being unarmed, and so not able to stand  
any longer, they die, and are withered,  
and bring forth no Fruit. He that recei-  
ved the Seed into stony places, the same  
is he that heareth the Word, and anon with  
joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in him-  
self, but dureth for a while; for when Tri-  
bulation or Persecution ariseth because of  
the Word, by and by they are offended, Mat.  
13. 20, 21. There is in Isa. 28. men-  
tion made of some, whose glorious Beauty  
shall be as fading Flowers, Isa. 28. 4. because  
it is Fruit before Summer. Both these are  
untimely Fruit.  
Secondly, They also bring forth un-  
timely Fruit, that stay till the Season is  
over. God will have his Fruit in His  
Season;

## 28 The Danger of being too late.

Season. I say, he will receive them of  
 each Man as shall render them to him, in  
 Their Season. *Matth. 23. 37.* The mulling  
 of the *Yoke* is dangerous, *Mat. 23. 4.*  
 the Door is that is dangerous, *Mat. 23. 10, 11.* Many there be that come not  
 till the Flood of God's Anger is raised,  
 and too deep for them to wade through.  
*Job. 34. 28.* *Psalm 124. 4.*  
*Psalm 124. 5.* *Psalm 124. 6.*  
*Psalm 124. 7.* *Psalm 124. 8.*  
*Psalm 124. 9.* *Psalm 124. 10.*  
*Psalm 124. 11.* *Psalm 124. 12.*  
*Psalm 124. 13.* *Psalm 124. 14.*  
*Psalm 124. 15.* *Psalm 124. 16.*  
*Psalm 124. 17.* *Psalm 124. 18.*  
*Psalm 124. 19.* *Psalm 124. 20.*  
*Psalm 124. 21.* *Psalm 124. 22.*  
*Psalm 124. 23.* *Psalm 124. 24.*  
*Psalm 124. 25.* *Psalm 124. 26.*  
*Psalm 124. 27.* *Psalm 124. 28.*  
*Psalm 124. 29.* *Psalm 124. 30.*  
*Psalm 124. 31.* *Psalm 124. 32.*  
*Psalm 124. 33.* *Psalm 124. 34.*  
*Psalm 124. 35.* *Psalm 124. 36.*  
*Psalm 124. 37.* *Psalm 124. 38.*  
*Psalm 124. 39.* *Psalm 124. 40.*  
*Psalm 124. 41.* *Psalm 124. 42.*  
*Psalm 124. 43.* *Psalm 124. 44.*  
*Psalm 124. 45.* *Psalm 124. 46.*  
*Psalm 124. 47.* *Psalm 124. 48.*  
*Psalm 124. 49.* *Psalm 124. 50.*  
*Psalm 124. 51.* *Psalm 124. 52.*  
*Psalm 124. 53.* *Psalm 124. 54.*  
*Psalm 124. 55.* *Psalm 124. 56.*  
*Psalm 124. 57.* *Psalm 124. 58.*  
*Psalm 124. 59.* *Psalm 124. 60.*  
*Psalm 124. 61.* *Psalm 124. 62.*  
*Psalm 124. 63.* *Psalm 124. 64.*  
*Psalm 124. 65.* *Psalm 124. 66.*  
*Psalm 124. 67.* *Psalm 124. 68.*  
*Psalm 124. 69.* *Psalm 124. 70.*  
*Psalm 124. 71.* *Psalm 124. 72.*  
*Psalm 124. 73.* *Psalm 124. 74.*  
*Psalm 124. 75.* *Psalm 124. 76.*  
*Psalm 124. 77.* *Psalm 124. 78.*  
*Psalm 124. 79.* *Psalm 124. 80.*  
*Psalm 124. 81.* *Psalm 124. 82.*  
*Psalm 124. 83.* *Psalm 124. 84.*  
*Psalm 124. 85.* *Psalm 124. 86.*  
*Psalm 124. 87.* *Psalm 124. 88.*  
*Psalm 124. 89.* *Psalm 124. 90.*  
*Psalm 124. 91.* *Psalm 124. 92.*  
*Psalm 124. 93.* *Psalm 124. 94.*  
*Psalm 124. 95.* *Psalm 124. 96.*  
*Psalm 124. 97.* *Psalm 124. 98.*  
*Psalm 124. 99.* *Psalm 124. 100.*

So the Children of *Israel*, they brought  
 to God the Fruits of Obedience too late;  
 their *Lo, we be here*, (*Numb. 14. 40, 41,*  
*42.*) came too late; Their, *We will go*  
 up, (*vers. 21, 22, 23.*) came too late.  
 The Lord had sworn, *Mat. 23. 10. 8.*  
*27. 3.* before, that they should not possess  
 the Land. All these are such as bring  
 forth untimely Fruit, *Psalm 124. 17. Luke 13.*  
*25, 26, 27.* It is the hard hap of the  
 Reprobate to do all things too late; to  
 be sensible of his want of Grace too late;  
 to be sorry for Sin too late; to seek Re-  
 pentance

penitance too late; to ask for Mercy, and  
to desire to go to Glory, too late.

1. Thus you see that Fruit *switten* in  
the growth, that *withereth*, and that comes  
not to maturity, is no Fruit.

2. That *hasty* Fruit, such as the Corn  
upon the Hensetop, Psal. 129. 6. withereth  
also afore it groweth up, and is no Fruit.

3. That the Fruit that is *vile* and *ill*  
tasted, is no Fruit.

4. That *wild* Fruit, wild grapes, Rev. 6.  
are no Fruit.

5. That *untimely* Fruit, such as comes  
too soon, or that comes too late; such as  
come not in their Season, are no Fruit.

And he came and sought Fruit thereon,  
and found none.

Nothing will do but Fruit: Mat. 21.

34. He looked for Grapes; when the time  
of Fruit drew near, he sent his Servants to  
the husbandmen that they might receive the  
Fruit of it.

Quest. But what Fruit doth God ex-  
pect?

A. Good Fruit. Every tree that bringeth  
not forth Good Fruit, is hewn down, Mat. 7. 19.

Now before the Fruit can be good the

Tree

Tree must be good, for good Fruit makes not a good Tree; *but a good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit; Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles?* A Man must be good, else he can bring forth no good Fruit; he must have righteousness imputed, that he may stand good in God's sight from the curse of his Law. He must have a Principle of Righteousness in his Soul, else how should he bring forth good Fruits; and hence it is, that a Christians fruits are called, *Gal. 5. 22, 23. The fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, Phil. 1. 11.* The Fruits of the Spirit, therefore the Spirit must be there: the Fruits of Righteousness, therefore righteousness must first be there; but to particularize in a few things briefly.

*First,* God expecteth Fruit that will answer, and be worthy of the Repentance, which thou feignest thy self to have. Every one in a Profession, and that hath crouded into the Vineyard, pretendeth to Repentance; now of every such Soul, God expecteth that the Fruits of Repentance be found to attend them. *Mat. 3. 8. Bring forth Fruits therefore meet for Repentance,* or answerable to thy



thy profession of the Doctrine of Repentance. *Barren Fig-tree*, seeing thou art a Professor, and art got into the Vineyard: thou standest before the Lord of the Vineyard, as one of the Trees of the Garden: Wherefore He looketh for Fruit from thee, as from the rest of the Trees in the Vineyard; *Fruit*, I say, and such as may declare thee in Heart and Life, one that hath made sound Profession of Repentance. By thy Profession thou hast said, *I am sensible of the evil of Sin*: Now then, live such a Life, as declares that thou art sensible of the Evil of Sin. By thy Profession thou hast said, *I am sorry for my Sin*: Why then, live such a life as may declare *This Sorrow*. By thy Profession thou hast said, *I am ashamed of my Sin*, Psal. 38. 18. yea, but live such a Life, that Men by that may see thy shame for Sin, Jer. 31. 19. By thy Profession thou sayest, *I have turned from, left off, and am become an enemy to every appearance of evil*, 1 Thess. 5. 22. Ah! but doth thy Life and Conversation declare thee to be such an one? Take heed, *barren Fig-tree*, lest thy Life should give thy Profession the lye. I say again, Take heed most diligently, lest thou shouldst be found for

### 32 The Barren fig-tree

for God himself will come for Fruit,  
*And he sought Fruit thereon.*

You have some Professors, that are  
 only Saints before Men, when they are  
 abroad, but are Devils and Vipers at  
 home; Saints by Profession, but Devils  
 by Practice; Saints in Word, but Sin-  
 ners in Heart and Life. These Men may  
 have the Profession, but they want the  
 Fruits that become Repentance.

*Barren Fig-tree!* Can it be imagined  
 that those that paint themselves, did ever  
 repent of their Pride? or that those  
 that pursue this World, did ever repent  
 of their Covetousness? or that those that  
 walk with wanton eyes, did ever repent  
 of their fleshly Lusts? Where, *Barren Fig-  
 tree*, is the Fruit of these Peoples Repen-  
 tance? Nay, do they not rather declare  
 to the World, that they have repented of  
 their Profession? Their fruits look as if  
 they had. Their Pride saith, they have  
 repented of their Humility: Their Co-  
 vetousness declareth, that they are weary  
 of depending upon God; and doth not thy  
 wanton actions declare, that thou abhorrest  
 Chastity? Where is thy Fruit, *Barren  
 Fig-tree*? Repentance is not only a sor-  
 row, and a shame for, but a turning from  
 Sin

Sin to God, Heb. 6. it is called Repentance from dead works. Hast thou that Godly Sorrow that worketh Repentance to Salvation, never to be repented of? 2 Cor. 7. 10. How dost thou shew thy carefulness; and clearing of thy self; thy indignation against Sin; thy fear of offending; thy vehement desire to walk with God; thy zeal for his Name; and Glory in the World; and what revenge hast thou in thy Heart against every thought of Disobedience?

But where is the Fruit of this Repentance? Where is thy Watchings; thy Fasting; thy Praying against the remainders of Corruption? Where is thy Self-aborrence; thy blushing before God, for the Sin that is yet behind? Where is thy tenderness of the Name of God and his Waies? Where is thy Self-denial and Contentment? How dost thou shew before Men the truth of thy turning to God? Hast thou renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness? 2 Cor. 4. 2. Canst thou commend thy self to every Man's conscience in the sight of God? *W*



What Fruit, barren Fig-tree, & what  
 degree of *Hebr.* Holiness for Faith pre-  
 scribes the *Hebr.* Act. 13. 9. What wilt thou  
 the Lord Jesus? *Yam.* *Yam.* *Yam.* *Yam.* *Yam.*  
*Love, Gal. 5.* *Yam.* *Yam.* *Yam.* *Yam.* *Yam.*  
 Thirdly, God expecteth Fruits, accord-  
 ing to the Season of Grace thou art un-  
 der, according to the measure of conser-  
 vation. In Perhaps thou art planted in a  
 good Soil, by great Waters, that thou  
 mightest bring forth Branches, and bear  
 Fruit, that thou mightest be a goodly  
 Vine on Fig-tree: Shall he not therefore  
 seek for Fruit, for Fruit on barren  
 trees and Barren Fig-tree, I God ex-  
 pect it, and will find it, and will bless  
 thee. For the Earth which drinketh in  
 the rain that cometh off upon it, and bringeth  
 forth herbs made for him by whom it is dressed,  
 receiveth blessing from God: But that which  
 beareth thorns and briers, receiveth curse, and  
 shall be burnt with fire, whose seed is to be burned;  
*Heb. 6. 7.* *Yam.* *Yam.* *Yam.* *Yam.* *Yam.*  
 Barren, *Sin.* How many showers of  
 Grace, how many dews from Heaven,  
 how many times have the Silver Streams  
 of the Holy Spirit God, and his blessing by his  
 Word, have caused thee to bring forth Fruit?  
 These Showers, and Streams, and the  
 Drops

Drops, that hang upon thy Boughs, will  
 all be accounted for. And will they not  
 testify against thee, that thou oughtest  
 of right to be ashamed? I fear, and trem-  
 ble, O thou barren Professor! Fruits that  
 become the profession of the Gospel, the Gos-  
 pel of Heaven, & such. The Gospel hath  
 in it the Forgiveness of Sins, the King-  
 dom of Heaven, and Eternal Life.  
 But what Fruit hath the Profession of a  
 belief of these things put forth in thy  
 Heart and Life? Hast thou given thy  
 self to the Lord? and is all that thou  
 hast to be ventured for his Name in this  
 World? Dost thou walk like one that is  
 bought without price, like one that  
 is free? The Fruit that God expect-  
 eth is such, that thou mayest for himselfe, Fruit  
 that may glorify God, & Gods Trees are  
 those of Righteousness, the planting of the  
 Lord, that shall bring forth good Fruit, that  
 tasteth of Heaven, abundance of good  
 Fruits. For herein, saith Christ, is my Fa-  
 ther's will, that ye bring forth much  
 Fruit, John 15. All manner of all kinds,  
 which shall be the Fruits of the Spirit in  
 us, Gal. 5. and Righteousness, and Truth.  
 Fruit before the World, Fruit before  
 the











of God, the Patience and Husbandry of  
 God? It is the Fruit of the Vineyard,  
 that is either the shame or the praise of  
 the Husbandman, I went by the Field of  
 the slothful, saith Solomon, and by the Vine-  
 yard of the Man void of Understanding,  
 and lo, it was grown over with Thorns,  
 and Nettles had covered the face thereof.

Prov. 24. 30-34. 32

**Barren Fig-tree.** If Men should make a  
 judgment of the care, and pains, and  
 labour of God in his Church by the fruit  
 that thou bringest forth, what might  
 they say, is he not slothful, is not he  
 careless, is he not without discretion?  
 O thy Thorns, thy Nettles, thy barren  
 Heart, and barren Life, is a continual  
 provocation to the eyes of his Glory,  
 likewise a dishonour to the glory of  
 his Grace.

**Barren Fig-tree.** hast thou heard all  
 these things, I will add yet one more.

And he came and sought, fruit thereon.

The question is not now, What thou  
 thinkest of thy self, nor what all the  
 people of God think of thee? but what  
 thou shalt be found in that day, when





in Obedience to the Lord; for the Ob-  
ject of God's displeasure, God cannot  
bestow with a fruitless Professor.

[Then] said he, &

Then, after this provocation; then, af-  
ter he had sought and found no Fruit,  
then. This word [then] doth shew us a  
kind of an inward disquietness; as he  
saith also in another place, upon a like  
provocation, *Then the anger of the Lord,*  
*and he is provoked, shall break against thee,*  
*and he will cut thee off, and will bring down  
thy name from under Heaven,*  
Dent. 29. 18, 19, 20. .d. 21. 151

Then, it intimateth that he was now  
come to a point, to a resolution what to  
do with this Fig-tree. *Then said he to  
his Druse of the Vineyard,* that is, to  
Jesus Christ; *Behold, as much as to say,*  
*come hither, here is a Fig-tree in my*  
*Vineyard, here is a Professor in my*  
*Church, that is barren, that beareth no*  
*Fruit.* However the barren Professor  
thinks of himself on Earth, the Lord  
cries out in Heaven against him; Isa. 5. 9.

And now go to, I will tell you what I will do  
to my Kingdome: I will take away the hedge  
thereof, and it shall be torn up: and I will  
break down the Wall thereof, and it shall be  
trodden down.

Behold, these three Years I have been seeking  
Fruit: but I have found none. Therefore I will  
visit you, saith the Lord God. Observe these three Years. God trieth  
out that his patience is abused, that his  
forbearance is abused: Behold, these  
three Years I have waited for birth: these  
three Years I have deferred mine anger.  
Therefore will I stretch out mine hand against  
thee, and destroy thee: I will weep with re-  
penting, Jer. 15. 6.

These three years. Observe, God layeth  
up all the time: I say, a remembrance of  
all the time, that a barren Fig-tree, or a  
fruitless Professor mispendeth in this World.  
As he saith also of Israel of old, Forty  
Years long was I grieved with this gene-  
ration, Psal. 95. 10.

These three Seasons. Observe, God re-  
members how many Seasons thou shalt  
mispend: For these three Years signify  
many Seasons. And when the time of Enu-

*drew nigh*, that is, about the Season they begin to be ripe, or that according to the Season might so have been. *Barren Fig-tree*, thou hast had Time, Seasons, Sermons, Ministers, Afflictions, Judgments, Mercies, and what not? and yet hast not been fruitful: thou hast had Awakenings, Reproofs, Threatnings, Comforts, and yet hast not been fruitful: Thou hast had Patterns, Examples, Citations, Provocations, and yet hast not been fruitful. Well, God hath laid up *thy three Years* with himself. He remembers every Time, every Season, every Sermon, every Minister, Affliction, Judgment, Mercy, awakening Pattern, Example, Citation, Provocation, He remembers all: As he said of Israel of old, *They have tempted me these ten times, and have not hearkned to my Voice*, Numb. 14. 22. And again, *I remember all their Wickedness*, Hof. 7. 2.

*These three Years, &c.*

He seeks for the Fruit of every Season: He will not that any of his Sermons, Ministers, Afflictions, Judgments, or Mercies should be lost, or stand for

Insignificant things, he will have reward  
*ing to the benefit bestowed,* 2 Chron. 32. 24.  
 25. Ezek. 14. 23. He hath not done  
 without a Cause all that he hath done,  
 and therefore he looketh for Fruit, Look  
 to it, *Barren Fig-trees*

*I came* [seeking] Fruit, *Awakened*  
 I *inquire* *from you* *that* *you* *have* *done* *in* *the* *land* *of* *the* *Chaldeans*

*Offer.* This word [seeking] signi-  
 fies a *narrow search*: for when a Man  
 seeks for Fruit on a Tree, he goes round  
 it, and round it, now looking into this  
 Bough, and then into that, he peeks in-  
 to the inmost Boughs, and the lowermost  
 Boughs, if perhaps Fruit may be there-  
 on. *His* *Circle* *Provocation*

*Barren Fig-tree*, God will look into  
 thy Boughs, he will be with thee in thy  
 Bed-Fruits, thy Midnight-Fruits, thy  
 Closet-Fruits, thy Family-Fruits, thy  
 Conversation-Fruits, to see if there be  
 any among all these that are fit for, or  
 worthy of the Name of the God of  
 Heaven. He sees what the Children of  
 Israel do in *the* *land* *of* *the* *Chaldeans* Ezek. 9. 12. *His*  
 things are open unto the Eye of him with  
 whom we have to do, Heb. 4. 12, 13. *He* *will* *be* *with* *you* *in* *the* *land* *of* *the* *Chaldeans*

Seeking Fruit on [this] Fig-tree. I told you before, that he keeps in remembrance the Times and Seasons that the barren Professor had wickedly mispent. Now, forasmuch as he also smiteth the Fig-tree, This Fig-tree; it sheweth that the barren Professor, above all Professors, is a continual odium in the Eyes of God. This Fig-tree, This Man Samah, Jer. 22. 28. This People draw nigh me with their Mouth, but have removed their Hearts far from me. God knoweth who they are among all the thousands of Israel, that are the barren and fruitless Professors, his hot will fall upon the Head of Achan, though he be hid among six hundred thousand Men. And he brought his Household, Man by Man, and Achan, the Son of Carmi, the Son of Zabdi, the Son of Zerah, of the Tribe of Judah, were taken, Job. 17. 18. This is the Achan, this is the Fig-tree, this is the Barren Professor.

There is a Man hath an hundred Trees in his Vineyard, and at the time of the Season, he walketh into his Vineyard to see how the Trees flourish; and as he

goes, and views, and pries, and observes how they are hanged with Fruit; behold, he comes to one where he findeth naught but Leaves. Now he makes a stand, looks upon it again and again, he looks also here and there, above and below; and if after all this seeking, *he finds nothing but Leaves thereon*; Then he begins to cast in his mind, how he may know this Tree next Year, what stands next it, or how far 'tis off the Hedge; but if there be nothing there that may be as a Mark to know it by; then he takes his Hook, and giveth it a private mark, *(And the Lord set a Mark upon Cain, Gen. 4.)* saying, Go thy ways, fruitless Fig-tree, *Thou hast spent this Season in vain.*

Yet doth he not cut it down, I will try it another Year; may be this was not a *bitting* Season. Therefore he comes again next Year to see if now it have Fruit; but as he found it *before*, so he finds it *now*, barren, barren, every Year barren; he looks again, *but finds no Fruit*. Now he begins to have *second* thoughts: How I neither hit last Year, nor this. Surely the Barrenness is not in the Season, sure the fault is in the Tree. How-

ever



ever I will spare it this Year also, but will give it a second Mark: And it may be, he will smite it with a hot Iron, because he begins to be angry.

Well, at the third Season he comes again for Fruit, but the third Year is like the first and second, no Fruit yet, it only cumbereth the Ground. What now must be done with this Fig-tree? Why, The Lord will lop its Boughs with terror; yea, the Thickets of those Professors with Him. I have waited, saith God, these three Years, I have missed of Fruit these three Years. It hath been a cumber-Ground these three Years, cut it down. Precept hath been upon Precept, and Line upon Line, one Year after another, for these three Years, but no Fruit can be seen, I find none, fetch out the Ax; I am sure this is the Fig-tree, I know it from the first Year, Barrenness was its sign then, Barrenness is its sign now, make it fit for the Fire. Behold, the Ax is laid to the Root of the Tree, every Tree that does not bringeth forth good Fruit, is cut down and cast into the Fire, Mark this. Observe, my Brethren, God's Heart cannot stand towards a barren Fig-tree.

You know thus it is with your selves:  
 If you have a Tree in your Orchard, or  
 Vineyard, that doth only cumber the  
 Ground, you cannot look upon that Tree  
 with pleasure, with complacency, and  
 delight: No, if you do but go by it, if  
 you do but cast your eye upon it, if  
 if you do but think of that Tree, you  
 threaten it in your Heart, saying, I will  
 hew thee down shortly; I will cut thee off  
 with thee shortly. And it is in vain for  
 any to think of perswading of you to  
 shew favour to the *barren Fig-tree*; and  
 if they should perswade, your Answer  
 is irrefragable, *It yieldeth me no profit, it taketh  
 up room, and doth no good; a better  
 may grow in its room.*

Thus when the godly among the Jews  
 (*Jer. 14. 17.*) made Prayer, that rebel-  
 lious *Israel* might not be cast out of the  
 Vineyard, what saith this Answer of  
 God? *Jer. 14. 2.* Though Moles and Sa-  
 mmel stood before me, yet would not my anger  
 be towards this People: wherefore cast them  
 out of my presence, and let *abaddon* go  
 forth.

What a Resolution is here, Moses and  
 Samuel could do almost any thing with  
 God in Prayer. How many times did  
 Moses by Prayer turn away God's judg-  
 ments from *Levi* Pharaoh *himself* yea,  
 how many times did he by Prayer pre-  
 serve *Israel*, when in the Wilderness,  
 (Psalm 106. 23.) from the Anger and  
 Wrath of God. *Samuel* is reckoned ex-  
 cellent this way, yea so excellent, that  
 when *Israel* had done that fearful thing,  
 to reject the Lord, and chuse them-  
 another King, (1 Sam. 8.) he prayed,  
 and the Lord spared, and forgave them:  
 But yet neither *Moses* nor *Samuel* can save  
 a barren Fig-tree. No though *Moses* and  
*Samuel* stood before me, that is, pleading,  
 arguing, interceding, supplicating, and  
 beseeching, yet could they not incline  
 mine heart to this People.

Church Members, I beseech you, do not  
 in banishment *cut it down*. saw 02. and  
 the Text: But what answer hath God  
 to this? *But Lord* it is a Fig-tree, a Fig-  
 tree, if it was a *Thorn*, or a *Bramble*,  
 or a *Thistle*, the matter would not be  
 much, but it is a *Fig-tree*, or a *Vine*.  
 Well, but mark the answer of God,  
 Ezekiel 17. 9. *Son of Man, what is the*

Vine-Tree, more than any Tree, with an Branch that is among the Trees of the Forest? Shall Wood be taken thereof to do any Work? or will Adam take a Bin thereof, to hang any Vessel thereon? If Trees that are set, or planted for Fruit, bring not forth that Fruit, there is betwixt them and the Trees of the Forest, no betterment at all, unless the betterment lieth in the Trees of the Wood, for they are fit to build withal; but a Fig-tree, or a Vine, if they bring not forth Fruit, yea good Fruit, they are fit for nothing at all, but to be cut down, and prepared for the fire; and so the Prophet goes on, Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel: if it serve not for Fruit, it will serve for fuel, and so the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the middle of it is burnt.

Ay but, these Fig-trees and Vines are Church-Members, Inhabiters of Jerusalem. So was the Fig-tree mentioned in the Text; But what answer hath God prepared for these Objections? Why Ver. 6, 7. Thus saith the Lord God, As the Vine-tree among the Trees of the Forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel; so will I give the Inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will for my face against them, they shall



with it, where she despisingly casts it  
down, and valueth it no more than a  
*Nettle*, or a *Weed*, or than the dust she  
hath swept out of her *Walks*. Yea, if  
any that see her should say, Why do  
you so? The answer is ready, 'Tis dead,  
'tis dead at Root: If I had let it stand,  
'twould but have cumbered the ground.  
The strange Slips (and also the Dead ones)  
they must be a heap in the Day of Grief,  
and of desperate Sorrow; Hag. 2. 10, 11.

*Cut it down.*

There be two manner of cutting  
down;

1. *First*, When a Man is cast out of the  
Vineyard.

2. *Secondly*, When a Man is cast out of  
the World.

1. *First*, When a Man is cast out of the  
Vineyard. And that is done two ways.

1. *By an immediate hand of God.*

2. *By the Churches due execution of their  
Laws and Censures which Christ for that  
purpose hath left with his Church.*

1. *First*, God cuts down the Barren Fig-  
tree by an immediate Hand, smiting his  
Roots, blasting his branches, and so

taken



take them away from among his people.  
Every Branch, saith Christ, that beareth  
not fruit is cut offe (my Father), saith  
every. Job. 1. 17. He taketh him out of  
the Church. He taketh him away from  
thee Godly. There are some things by  
which God taketh the barren Professor  
from among the Children of God. I will

First, *Strong Delusions* and Secondly, *Open Profaneness*.  
First, By strong Delusions, such as be  
guile the Soul with damnable Doctrines,  
that swerve from Faith and Goodness,  
Isa. 66. 3, 4. They have despised his Word,  
saith God, and their Soul de-  
lighteth in their Abominations. I will  
cause their Delusions, and will bring their  
Fruit upon them. I will smite them with  
blindness, hard, hardness of heart, and  
filling of Eyes, and will also suffer the  
Tempter to tempt and effect his hellish  
Designs upon them. 2. Thess. 2. 11, 12.  
God will send them strong Delusions,  
that they may believe Lies. That they  
all might be damned who believe not the  
Truth, but have pleasure in Unrighteous-  
ness. 1. Thess. 5. 10. He will put in his bolts  
and Secondly, Sometimes God taketh away  
a barren Professor by open Profaneness.

There

There is one that taken up a Profession  
of what *is* in *him*, in the Lord Jesus  
Christ; (but this Profession is but a Gloze  
he secretly practiseth Wickedness: He  
is a Glutton, a Drunkard, or Covetous,  
or Unclean. Well, saith God, I will  
loose the Reins of this Professor, I will  
give him up to his vile Affections, I will  
loose the Reins of his Lusts before him,  
he shall be entangled with his beastly  
lusts, he shall be overcome of ungodly  
Company. Thus they that turn aside  
to their own crooked ways, *Psalm 125*  
*The Lord shall send them forth with the*  
*workers of iniquity.* This is God's Hand  
immediately; God is now dealing with  
this Man himself. *Baruch 45*, hear-  
ing of how art craved into a Profession,  
but got among the Godly, and there art  
a scandal to the Holy and Glorious Gos-  
pel; but without so coming, that like  
the Son of *Zechariah*, thou art too hard  
for the Church; She knows not how to  
deal with thee. Well, saith God, I will  
deal with that Man myself: *Ezekiel 14*  
*And I will remove the Idol by myself;*  
he that sets up his Idols in his Heart, and  
puts the Stumbling-block of his Iniquity  
before his face, and yet comes and ap-  
pears

# The Barren Fig-tree 87

pears before me; I will surely find  
 against that Man, and will surely bring him down  
 and a Proverb; and I will cut him off from  
 the midst of my People; and ye shall know  
 that I am the Lord.

But, secondly, God doth sometimes  
 cut down the barren Fig-tree by the  
 Church, by the Churches due execution  
 of the Laws and Censures, which Christ  
 for that purpose hath left with his  
 Church. This is the meaning of that in  
 Mat. 18. 17. Cor. 5. and that in 1 Tim.  
 12. upon which now I shall here en-  
 large. But which way soever God deal-  
 eth with thee, O thou barren Fig-tree,  
 whether by himself immediately, or by  
 his Church, it amounts to one and the  
 same. For if timely Repentance pre-  
 vents not, The end of that Soul is damna-  
 tion. They are blasted, and withered,  
 and gathered by Men, God's Enemies;  
 and at last being cast into the Fire,  
 burning must be their end. That which  
 beareth Briers and Thorns, is a night and  
 darkness, whose end it is to be burned, Heb.  
 6. 8.

And again, sometimes by cut it down,  
 God means, cast it out of the World:  
 Thus he cut down Nadab and Abihu,  
 when

## 58 The Tenth Figure

when he hurled them up with Fire from  
Heaven, Numb. 16. 31, 32, 33. Thus  
he cut down Corah, Dathan, and Abi-  
ram, when he made the Earth to swallow  
them up. Thus he cut down Saul, & Sam-  
son, when he gave him up to fall upon  
the edge of his own Sward, and died. Of him  
he cut down Annias with Saphira, who  
slew them down dead in  
the midst of the Congregation, Acts 5.  
9, 10. It might here also Discourser  
of the Bishop and Judas, who  
were of their kindred. The first by God's  
rending Hand, the other were given  
up of God to be their own Execution-  
ers. These were barren and unprofi-  
table Figures, such as God took no  
pleasure in, therefore he commanded  
to cut them down. The Eighth Saint  
Figure is David. He shall deliver them away  
from all Iniquities, both living, and yet to be  
cut down into the ground. 2 Sam. 21.  
19. Hearken: God calls  
for the Ark, his Sward, bring it higher  
than the Mountains. Professor, Cut him  
down, why canst thou be the Ground? 8.

And again, sometimes by cut down  
the World, call it out of the World  
and cut down the World and the  
World.

By these words the Lord suggesteth  
 Reasons of his Displeasure against the  
 Barren Fig-tree: *It cumbereth the Ground*  
 The Holy Ghost doth not only take an  
 Argument from its *barrenness*, but be-  
 cause it is a *Cumber-ground*. Therefore cut  
 it down, wherefore it must needs be a  
 provocation.  
 Because as much as in him lieth,  
 disappointeth the Design of God in  
 planting his Vineyard: *I feared that it*  
*should bring forth fruit*.  
 It hath also abused his Patience, his  
 Honour, his Time, his Labour, his  
 Sins, his Care, and providence of Pro-  
 tection and Preservation: For, his hedges  
 are planted, and walls it about.  
 It groweth in all these things: *thou*  
*enrichest his Vineyard*, and looks great  
 sight and Day, but all these things thou  
 hast abused.  
 Therefore there are other Reasons of  
 his Displeasure: *As in the Vineyard*  
*saith the Lord*. A *Cumber-ground* is a dry mock  
 all reproach to Religion, a mock and  
 reproach



given to a Nation that shall render him  
 their Fruits in their Season. The Jews for  
 their barrenness were cut down, and more  
 fruitful People put in their room. As  
 David also said to barren Saul, 1 Sam.  
 28. The Lord hath rent the Kingdom  
 from thee, and hath given it to thy Neigh-  
 bour: that is better than thou; the unpro-  
 fitable Servant must be cast out, must be  
 cut down, Mat. 24. 27. *Barren Fig-tree!*  
*Barren-ground!* How many hopeful,  
 amiable, forward People, halt thou  
 thy fruitless and unprofitable Life,  
 cast out of the Vineyard of God; for  
 sake have the People stumbled at Re-  
 son; By thy Life have they been kept  
 from the Love of their own Salvation.  
 Thou halt been also a means of harden-  
 ing others, and of quenching, and kil-  
 ling weak beginnings. Well, Barren Fig-  
 tree! *Look on thy self,* (thou wilt not go  
 to Heaven thy self, and them that would,  
 thou hinderest); Thou must not always  
 hinder the Ground, nor always hinder  
 the Salvation of others: Thou shalt be  
 cut down, and another shall be planted in  
 thy place. *The Barren-ground is a Sack,*  
*draws away the Heart and Nonchal-*  
*lance* ment



ment from the other Trees. Were the  
 Canker ground cut down, the other would  
 be more fruitful: he draws away the  
 fatness of the ground to himself, the  
 would make the other more hearty and  
 fruitful. *One Sinner destroyeth much good.*

Recl. 9-18

The Canker ground is a very Drone  
 the Flye, that eats up the Honey that  
 should feed the labouring Bee;  
 it is a Thief in the Garden, that wasteth  
 Tithes, but giveth no Light: he is  
 a *perjuring* Slave, that is fit for nought but  
 the Dunghill. Look to it Barren Fig-tree.

Take heed have the People humbled so Re.

By the Life have they been kept

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

And I sawing said unto him, Lord,

barren, cumber-ground Fig-tree.

In this Petition there are Six things  
considerable ;

First, That Justice might be deferred,  
Or that Justice might be deferred by Lord  
it alone, &c. a while longer.

Secondly, Here is time prefixed, as a  
space to try if more means will cure the  
Fig-tree. Lord, let it alone this Year

Thirdly, The means to help it, are  
propounded, *until I shall dig about it*

Fourthly, Here is also an insinuation of  
a Supposition, that by thus doing, God's  
expectation may be answered, *that if it*

Fifthly, Here is a Supposition that the  
barren Fig-tree may yet abide here, when  
Christ hath done what he will, *and it*

Sixthly, Here is at last a Resolution, that  
thou continue barren, *howing Days*  
*will come upon thee.* And if it bear fruit,  
well, *And if not, then after that thou shalt*

But to proceed according to my for-  
mer Method, by Way of Exposition

again Lord, *as is mine this Year also* and

Here is astonishing Grace indeed, astonishing Grace! I say, that the Lord Jesus should concern himself with a *barren Fig-tree*; that He should step in to stop the blow from a *barren Fig-tree*. True He stoppt the blow but for a time; *But why did he stop it at all? Why did he fetch out the Ax? Why did he not Execution? Why did not he cut it down Barren Fig-tree!* 'tis well for thee that there is a Jesus at God's right Hand, Jesus of that largeness of bowels, *how compassion for a barren Fig-tree*, else Justice had never let thee alone to cumber the Ground as thou hast done. When *Israel* also had sinned against God, down they had gone, *But that Moses stood in the breach*, Exod. 32. 10. *Let me alone, say God to him, that I may consume them in wrath, and I will make of thee a great Nation.* *Barren Fig-tree*, dost thou hear. Thou knowest not how oft the hand of Divine Justice hath been up to strike, and how many Years since thou hadst been cut down, had not Jesus caught hold of his Father's Ax. Let me alone, let

me fetch my blow, or cut it down, why  
 chidest thou it in the ground? Wilt thou not  
 hear yet, Barren Fig-tree? Wilt thou  
 provoke still? Thou hast wearied Men and  
 provoked the Justice of God; and wilt  
 thou weary God also? I have said of thee  
 things he supposed as a Remedy.

Lord, let it alone this Year, and the  
 next Year, and the Year following, and I  
 will see if I can make it fruitful. I will  
 not beg a long Life, nor that it might still  
 be barren, and so provoke thee. I beg for  
 the sake of the Soul, the immortal Soul,  
 that I spare it one Year only, one Year lon-  
 ger, this Year also; if I do any Good to  
 it, it will be in little time. Thou shalt  
 not be over-wearied with waiting, nor  
 I doubt I shall dig about it. I have said of thee  
 things he supposed as a Remedy. Dost thou hear what  
 saying there is between the King and the  
 and the Husband-Man for thy Life? Cut  
 it down, says one. Lord, there is, saith  
 the other. It is a summer-ground, saith  
 the Father, and one Year longer prays the  
 Son, let it alone this Year also.

ye fetch my blow, or cut it down, why  
 will I still dig about it? Will I still  
 hoe it? Will I still water it? Will I still  
 trim it? The Lord saith by these words sup-  
 poseth two things, one Cause of the want  
 of Fruit in a Barren Fig-tree, and two  
 things he supposeth as a Remedy.

The things that are a cause of want of  
 Fruit, are,

1. *The Earth-bound Lord, the Fig-tree*  
*is Earth-bound;* meaning to shew that he

is bound to the earth, and not to the Lord.

2. *Wherefore according to the propound-*  
*eth;* In the first place, the Lord saith

First, To loosen the Earth, to dig about it.

Secondly, And then to supply it with  
 dung, you shall dig about it, and dung it.

Earth is too close to the roots, and  
 shall dig about it. I doubt it is too much

ground-bound, The Love of this World,  
 and the carnality of the heart, are like

the roots of the Heart of this Professor. The love of  
 Riches, the Love of Honours, the

Love of Pleasures, are the Thorns that  
 choke the Word; 1 Joh. 2: 15, 16. For

all that is in the World, the Lusts of the  
 flesh, the Lusts of the Eyes, and the Pride

so these are not of the Father, but en-  
 vity to God; how then (where these  
 things bind up the Heart) can there be  
 Fruit brought forth to God? Barren Fig-  
 tree, see how the Lord Jesus, by these  
 very words, suggesteth the cause of thy  
 fruitfulness of Soul. The things of this  
 World lie too close to thy Heart; the Earth  
 with its things, have bound up thy Roots.  
 Thou art an Earth-bound Soul, thou art wrapt  
 up in thick Clay. If any Man love the  
 World, the Love of the Father is not in him:  
 how then can he be fruitful in the Vine-  
 yard? This kept Judas from the Fruit  
 of caring for the poor, Joh. 12. 6. This  
 kept Demas from the Fruit of Self-denial,  
 2 Tim. 4. 10. And this kept Ananias and  
 Sapphira his Wife, from the goodly Fruit  
 of Sincerity and Truth, Act. 5. 5, 10. What  
 shall I say, These are foolish and hurtful  
 Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction  
 and Perdition; for the love of Money is the  
 root of all Evil, 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. How  
 then can good Fruit grow from such a  
 Root, the Root of all Evil; Which while  
 some covet after, they have excised from the  
 Haich, and pierced themselves through with  
 many Sorrows. It is an evil Root, say  
 it is the Root of all Evil: how then

can the Professor that hath such a Root, or a Root wrap'd up in such earthly things, as the Lusts, and Pleasures, and Vanities of this World, bring forth Fruit to God!

*Unl. I shall [dig] about him*  
 Lord, I will loose his Roots, *I will dig up this Earth*, I will lay his Roots bare; my Hand shall be upon him by Sicknes, by Disappointments, by cross Providences; I will dig about him until he stands shaking and tottering, until he be ready to fall; then, if ever, he will seek to take faster hold. Thus, I say, deals the Lord Jesus oft-times with the barren Professor; *he diggeth about him*, he smiteth one blow at his Heart, another blow at his Lusts; a third at his Pleasures, a fourth at his Comforts, another at his Self-conceitedness; thus he diggeth about him: This is the way to take bad Earth from his Roots, and to loosen his Roots from the Earth. *Barren Fig-tree*, see here the Care, the Love, the Labour and Way, which the Lord Jesus, the Dresser of the Vineyard, is fain to take with thee, if happily thou mayest be made fruitful.

*Unl.*



*Until I shall dig about it, and [dung] it.*

As the Earth, by binding the Roots too closely, may hinder the Tree's being fruitful; so the want of better Means may be also a Cause thereof. And this is more than intimated by the Dresser of the Vineyard, *until I shall dig about it, and dung it*, I will supply it with a more fruitful Ministry, with a warmer Word. I will give them Pastors *after mine own Heart, I will dung them*; You know Dung is a more warm, more fat, more hearty, and succouring Matter, than is commonly the place in which Trees are planted. *I will dig about it, and dung it*, I will bring it under an *heart-awakening* Ministry, the Means of Grace shall be *fat, and good*. I will also visit it with Heart-awakening, Heart-warming, Heart-encouraging Considerations; I will apply warm Dung to *his Roots*, I will strive with him by my Spirit, and give him some tastes of the heavenly Gift, and the Power of the World to come. I am loth to lose him for want of digging;

Lord, let it alone this Year also, until I shall dig about it, and dung it.

And if it bear Fruit, well.]

And if the Fruit of all my Labour doth make this Fig-tree fruitful, I shall count my Time, my Labour and Means well bestowed upon it; And thou also, O my God, shalt be therewith much delighted: For thou art gracious, and merciful, and repemest thee of the Evil which thou threatnest to bring upon a People.

These words therefore inform us, that if a barren Fig-tree, a barren Professor, shall now at last bring forth Fruit to God, it shall go well with that Professor, it shall go well with that poor Soul. His former Barrenness, his former tempting of God, his abuse of God's Patience, and long-Suffering; his unspending Year after Year, shall now be all forgiven him. Yea, God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ will now pass by, and forget all, and say, Well done, at the last. When I say to the Wicked, O wicked Man, thou shalt surely die; if he then do that which is lawful and right, if he walk in the Statutes of Life, without committing Iniquity, he

shall

shall surely live, *he shall die*, Ezek. 3.

3.

Barren Fig-tree, Dost thou hear! the  
 Axe is laid to thy Roots, the Lord Jesus  
 prays God to spare thee! Hath he been  
 digging about thee? Hath he been dung-  
 ing of thee? O barren Fig-tree, now  
 thou art come to the Point; if thou  
 shalt now become good, if thou shalt af-  
 ter a gracious manner suck in the Go-  
 spel-dung, and if thou shalt bring forth  
 Fruit unto God, well; but if not, the  
 Fire is the last. Fruit, or the Fire; Fruit,  
 or the Fire; Barren Fig-tree. If it bear

Fruit, well. *Minnow it bequeth bus*, *Time*  
*ym iasql* *bas* *aisy ni nixed* *beriodal* *I*  
*should if not, then after that thou shalt*  
*say die to down.* *part of* *norm* *read* *uor*  
*the* *chier* *hem* *in* *him* *radus* *W* *noion* *Q*

And if not, &c. The Lord Jesus by  
 this, *If*, giveth us to understand, that  
 there is a Generation of Professors in  
 the World, that are incurable, that will  
 not, that cannot repent, nor be profited  
 by the means of Grace: A Generation,  
 I say, that will retain a Profession, that  
 will bring forth Fruit: A Generation  
 that will wear out the Patience of God,  
 his kind Tide, his Threatnings, and his  
 mercies.

## 72 The Barren Fig-tree.

tercessions, Judgments and Mercies, *And after all will be unfruitful.*

O the desperate Wickedness that is in thy Heart! Barren Professor, Dost thou hear, the Lord Jesus stands yet in doubt about thee! There is an *if* stands yet in the way. I say, the Lord Jesus stands yet in doubt about thee, whether or no at last thou wilt be good; whether he may not labour in vain; whether his digging and dunging will come to more than lost labour. *I gave her space to repent, and she repented not, Rev. 2. 21. I digged about it, I dunged it; I gained Time, and supplied it with Means; but I laboured herein in vain, and spent my strength for naught and in vain. Dost thou hear, Barren Fig-tree! There is yet a Question, Whether 'twill be well with thy Soul at last?*

*And if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

There is nothing more exasperating to the Mind of a Man, than to find all his Kindness and Favour slighted. Neither is the Lord Jesus so provoked with any thing, as when Sinners abuse his Means

Means of Grace; if it be barren and fruitless under my Gospel; if it turn my Grace into wantonness; if, after digging, and dunging, and waiting, it yet remain unfruitful, I will let thee cut it down.

Gospel-means applied, is the last Remedy for a barren Professor; if the Gospel, if the Grace of the Gospel will do it, there can be nothing expected, but yet it doth. *Then again that thou shalt*

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together, as an Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and thou wouldst not. Therefore your Houses are left unto you desolate. Matth. 23. 37, 38.* It is to be noted, but that this Lord Jesus, who so full did good, stop to the execution of his Father's Justice, because he found no other more Means, with the Jews, to save them, but that he should fulfill his Commission, as he was sent, to witness to all Jews, that they should be saved by the Gospel, and not by the Law. *John 1. 9.* *John 1. 12.* *John 1. 13.* *John 1. 14.* *John 1. 15.* *John 1. 16.* *John 1. 17.* *John 1. 18.* *John 1. 19.* *John 1. 20.* *John 1. 21.* *John 1. 22.* *John 1. 23.* *John 1. 24.* *John 1. 25.* *John 1. 26.* *John 1. 27.* *John 1. 28.* *John 1. 29.* *John 1. 30.* *John 1. 31.* *John 1. 32.* *John 1. 33.* *John 1. 34.* *John 1. 35.* *John 1. 36.* *John 1. 37.* *John 1. 38.* *John 1. 39.* *John 1. 40.* *John 1. 41.* *John 1. 42.* *John 1. 43.* *John 1. 44.* *John 1. 45.* *John 1. 46.* *John 1. 47.* *John 1. 48.* *John 1. 49.* *John 1. 50.* *John 1. 51.* *John 1. 52.* *John 1. 53.* *John 1. 54.* *John 1. 55.* *John 1. 56.* *John 1. 57.* *John 1. 58.* *John 1. 59.* *John 1. 60.* *John 1. 61.* *John 1. 62.* *John 1. 63.* *John 1. 64.* *John 1. 65.* *John 1. 66.* *John 1. 67.* *John 1. 68.* *John 1. 69.* *John 1. 70.* *John 1. 71.* *John 1. 72.* *John 1. 73.* *John 1. 74.* *John 1. 75.* *John 1. 76.* *John 1. 77.* *John 1. 78.* *John 1. 79.* *John 1. 80.* *John 1. 81.* *John 1. 82.* *John 1. 83.* *John 1. 84.* *John 1. 85.* *John 1. 86.* *John 1. 87.* *John 1. 88.* *John 1. 89.* *John 1. 90.* *John 1. 91.* *John 1. 92.* *John 1. 93.* *John 1. 94.* *John 1. 95.* *John 1. 96.* *John 1. 97.* *John 1. 98.* *John 1. 99.* *John 1. 100.*



deliver up this Professor to thee again, I have done, I have done all, I have done praying, and endeavouring, I will hold the head of thine An. No longer: Take him into the Hands of Justice, do Justice, do the Law, I will never beg for him more. After that thou shalt cut it down. Who will defend them when I depart from them, Hos. 1. 2. Now is this Professor left naked indeed, naked to God, naked to Satan, naked to Sin, naked to the Law, naked to Death, naked to Hell, naked to Judgment, and naked to the Gripses of a Guilty Conscience, and to the torment of that Worm that never dies, and to that Fire that never shall be quenched. Heb. 12. 25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven. From this brief pass through this Parable, you have these two general Observations; the first is, That even when the Justice of God cries out, I cannot endure to wait on this barren Professor any longer: Then Jesus Christ intercedes for a little more Patience, and a little more striving with this Professor, if possible he may make



## 76 The Barren fig tree

him a fruitful Professor. *Lord, let it alone this Year also, until I shall dig about it, and dress it, and if it bear Fruit, well: &c.*

*Secondly,* There are some Professors whose Day of Grace will end with, *cut it down,* with Judgment; when Christ by his means, hath been used for their Salvation.

The First of these Observations I shall pass, and not meddle at all therewith: But shall briefly speak to the Second, to wit,

*That there are some Professors, whose Day of Grace will end with, cut it down, with Judgment, when Christ by his means hath been used for their Salvation.*

This the Apostle sheweth in that third Chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he tells us, that the People of the Jews, after a forty Years patience, and endeavour to do them good by the means appointed for that purpose, their end was to be cut down, or excluded the Land of Promise, for their final incredulity. So we see they could not enter in, because of Unbelief. Wherefore saith he, *I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do always err in their Hearts; and they have not known my ways: So I swore in my*

Who shall not enter into my Rest. As who should say, I would they should have entered in, and for that purpose I sought them out of Egypt, led them through the Sea, and taught them in the Wilderness, but they did not answer my Work nor Designs in that Matter: therefore they shall not. Iware they shall not. I more in my Wrath they should not enter into my Rest. Here is cutting down with Indement. So again, Chap. 1. 16. As I have sworn in my Wrath, I will not enter into my Rest, although the Works were finished from the Foundation of the World. Heb. 4. 2, 3, 4. This word [it] is the same with [they shall not] in the Chapter before. And where he saith, Although the Works were finished from the Foundation of the World. He giueth us to understand, that what preparations soever are made for the Salvation of Sinners, and of how long continuance soeuer they are, yet the God-tempting, God-provoking, and fruitless professor is like to go without a share therein; although the Works were finish'd from the Foundation of the World. Jude 6. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the

the Lord having freed the People out of the Land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that destroyed him, and the Angels that kept not their first Estate, but left their own habitation, be kept in everlasting Chains under Darkness, until the Judgment of the great Day. Here is an instance to purpose, an instance of Men and Angels: Men saved out of the Land of Egypt, and in their journey toward Canaan, the Type of Heaven, cut down; Angels created and placed in the Heavens in great Estate and Principality; yet both these, became unfruitful to God in their places, were cut down, the Men destroyed by God, (for so saith the Text) and the Angels reserved in everlasting Chains under Darkness, until the Judgment of the great Day.

Now, in my handling of this Point, I shall discourse of the *cutting down*, or the Judgment here denounced, as it respecteth the doing of it by God's Hand immediately, and that too, with respect to his *casting them out of the World*; and not as it respecteth an Act of the Church, &c. And as to this cutting down, or Judgment, it must be concluded, that it *cannot be before the Day of*

Grace be past with the *Fig-tree*. But according to the Observation, There be some Professors whose Day of Grace will end, with the cutting down; and according to the words of the Text, Then *after that thou shalt cut it down*. After that, that is, after all my Attempts and Endeavours to make it fruitful, after I have left it, given it over, done with it, and have resolved to bestow no more Days of Grace, Opportunities of Grace, and means of Grace upon it; then, after that, thou shalt cut it down.

Besides, the *giving up* of the *Fig-tree*, is before the Execution. Execution is not always presently upon the Sentence given; for after that a convenient Time is thought on, and then is cutting down: And so it is here in the Text. The Decree, that he shall perish, is gathered from its continuing fruitless, quite through the last Year, from its continuing fruitless at the end of all Endeavours. But cutting down is not yet, for that comes with an after-word; *Then after that thou shalt cut it down*.

So then, that I may orderly proceed with the Observation, I must lay down these two Propositions.

Prop.

*Prop. 1. That the Day of Grace ends with some Men before God takes them out of this World. And*

*Prop. 2. The Deaths or Deaths of such Men will be dreadful. For the Day of Grace ends when it is understood in the largest sense, (as here indeed it ought) it sheweth not only the Wrath of God against a Man's Life in this World, but his Wrath against him Body and Soul. And is as much as to lay out him out from all the Privileges and Benefits that come by Grace, both in this World, and that which is to come.*

*But to proceed, The Day of Grace ends with some Men before God taketh them out of this World.*

I shall give you some Instances of this, and so go on to the last Proposition.

*First, I shall instance, Cain; Cain was a Professor; (Gen. 4. 3.) a Sacrificer, a Worshipper of God; yea the first Worshipper that we read of after the Fall; but his Grapes were wild Ones, Gen. 4. 5. 8. his Works were Evil; he did not do what he did, from true Gospel-motives; therefore God disallowed his Work; at this his Countenance falls; Wherefore he envies his Brother, disputes him, takes*

his opportunity and kills him. Now in that day that he did this Act, were the Heavens closed up against him, and that himself did smartingly and fearfully feel when God made inquisition for the blood of Abel. And now raised (saith God) shall thou be from the Earth, which hath opened her Mouth to receive thy Brother's Blood from thy Hand, &c. Gen. 4. 11, 12, 13, 14. And Cain said, My Punishment is greater than I can bear. Mine Iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven. Behold, thou hast driven me out this Day from the Face of the Earth, and from thy Face shall I be hid. Now thou art cursed, saith God. Thou hast driven me out this Day, saith Cain, and from thy Face shall I be hid. I shall never more have Hope in thee, Smile from thee, nor expect Mercy at thy Hand. Thus therefore, Cain's Day of Grace ended, and the Heavens, with God's own Heart, were shut up against him; yet after this, he lived long, Gen. 4. 10. Cursing now was not come yet; after this he lived to marry a Wife, ver. 17, to beget a cursed Brood, to build a City, (and what else, I know not) all which could not be quickly done: Wherefore Cain might

might live after the Day of Grace was  
 out with him, several hundred of Years  
 ago, and, in all this time, Gen.  
 25, 26. *Isaac* was a Professor, was  
 brought up in *Isaac's* Family, and  
 was circumcised at *Isaac's* Years of  
 12. But he was the Son of the  
 Bond Woman, he brought not forth good  
 fruit, he was a wild Professor: For all his  
 Religion, he would scoff at those that  
 were better than himself. Well, upon  
 a day his Brother *Isaac* was weaned, at  
 which time his Father made a Feast, and  
 rejoiced before the Lord, for that he had  
 given him the promised Son, at this time  
*Isaac* was then their Son, and good  
 fruiting. Then came the Spirit of God  
 upon *Isaac*, and he cried, *Cast him out*  
*and the Bond woman and her Son,*  
*and the Son of this Bond woman shall not*  
*inherit with the Son of Isaac,* Gen. 25  
 29, 30, 31. Now *Isaac* to the *Galatians*  
 (Chap. 4. 19, 30, 31.) makes this call-  
 ing out to be not only a calling out of  
*Isaac's* Family, but a calling out of  
 the *Galatians* from the *Saints* in *Isaac's*  
 Family, and giveth us a notable proof  
 thereof, in saying, that when he died  
 he was buried in his People, Gen. 25, 17.  
 In him







Grace is to be reckoned from his selling of his Birth-right: For there the Apostle points it, lest there be among any, that like Esau, sell his Birth-right: for then goes hence the Blessing also.

But Esau sold his Birth-right long before his Death. Twenty Years after this he was with Laban, (Gen. 29. 24. 25. 26.) and when he returned home, his father Esau met him: Further, after when Jacob dwelt again some time with his father, then Jacob and Esau buried him. I suppose, (Gen. 35. 28. 29.)

he might live above forty, yet for ought now above seventy years after he had sold his Birth-right, and so consequently put himself out of the Grace of God. For things I would further note upon these Proud Professors: it has noted is of

first, Cleave an angry Professor; of second, Mocking one; Esau a lustful, game one; and these Symptoms of a Barren Professor. For he that can be angry, and can mock, and that can indulge his lust, cannot bring forth Fruit to God. Thirdly, The Day of Grace ended in these Professors at that time when they committed some grievous Sin.

Gen's, when he killed his Brother; *Is-  
mael's*, when he mocked at *Isaac*, &c. an  
Esau when out of love to his Lusts,  
despised; and sold his Birth-right  
unto *Jacob* his Brother.

These three Professors, *Thou* mayst  
that in half a quarter of an hour, from  
out of which thou mayst not be delivered  
either in this or in the next.

Thou mayst see these three, who  
lived better lives, than ever the  
world saw, in outward things, than ever  
did before. Again, after this, was *Lot*  
of the City of *Genoa*, and *Ismael* was a  
Prince of the *Arabians*.

And *Ismael* was a  
Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*.

And *Ismael* was a  
Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*.

And *Ismael* was a  
Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*.

And *Ismael* was a  
Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*.

And *Ismael* was a  
Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*.

And *Ismael* was a  
Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*, and his Brother  
was a Prince of the *Arabians*.

Now then, to shew you, by some  
 signs, how you may know that the Day  
 of Grace is ended, or near to ending  
 with the Barren Professor; *And often that*  
*the fig tree shall cut it down.*  
**First,** He that hath stood it out against  
 God, and that diath withstood all those  
 means for Fruit, that God hath used for  
 the making of him (if he might have  
 been a fruitful Tree in his Garden, he  
 is in this danger; and this indeed is the  
 sense of the *Parable*. The Fig tree, here  
 mentioned, was blessed with the appli-  
 cation of means, had time allowed it to  
 receive the nourishment; but it overstood,  
 withstood, overstood *all*, *all* that the  
 husband-man did, *all* that the Vine-  
 dresser did; *is his season of Grace, and*  
*the time of the Gospel, the time of visitation*  
*is past.* **Signs of being past Grace.**

But a little distinctly to particularize  
 four or five Particulars: **First Sign** The Day of Grace is like  
 to be past, when a Professor hath with-  
 stood, abused, and worn out God's Pat-  
 ience, then he is in danger, this is a pro-  
 vocation, then God cries, *Cut it down.*  
 There are some Men that steal into a  
 Profes-

Profession, *no body knows how*; even as  
 Fig-tree was brought into the Vineyard  
 by other hands than God's; and as  
 they abide lifeless, graceless, carnal  
 and without any good Conscience to God.  
 Perhaps they came in for the Love  
 for a Trade, for Credit, for a Blessing,  
 it may be to baffle and choke the Church  
 and grinding Pangs of an awakened  
 disgusted Conscience. Now have  
 obtained their purpose, *like the Sinner*  
*now*, they are at ease, and secure;  
 like *Agag*, *Isa. 45. 31.* Surely  
*thine sons of Desol.* it pass and am on  
 shall be saved, and go to Heaven: They  
 in these vain conceits *is* *founde a Tree*,  
 or three; not remembering that at every  
 Season of Grace, and at every opportunity  
 of the Gospel, the Lord comes  
 seeking Fruit. Well, Sinner, well barren  
 Fig-tree, this is but a course beginning  
 God comes for Fruit. What have I heard  
 saith God, what a Fig-tree is, that  
 that hath stood this Year in my Vine-  
 yard, and brought me forth no Fruit.  
 I will say unto him, Professor! Barren  
 Fig-tree, be fruitful hitherto for Fruit  
 I expect Fruit, I must have Fruit  
 therefore bethink thy self. At these things  
 Professors

of fallen pauses; but these are words,  
 blows, therefore off goes this Confide-  
 tion from the Heart. When God  
 comes the next Year, he finds him still as  
 was, a barren, fruitless number ground.  
 And now again he complains, here are  
 Tears gone, and no Fruit appears;  
 Well, I will defer mine anger for my  
 name sake. *Isa. 48. 9. I will defer mine*  
*anger for my Praise, I will refrain from*  
*that I see that it is of (as yet.) I will*  
*wait, I will yet wait to be Gracious.*  
 But this helps not; this hath not the least  
 influence upon the barren Fig-tree. *Tell,*  
*saith he, here is no Threatning: God is*  
*merciful, he will defer his anger, Isa. 30.*  
*He waits to be gracious: I am not*  
*afraid.* O how ungodly Men, that  
 are at unawares crept into the Vineyard,  
 do they turn the Grace of our God into  
 conscious sloth. Well, he comes the third  
 Year for Fruit, as he did before, but  
 still he finds but a barren Fig-tree. No  
 fruit: now he cries out again, *O thou*  
*treacher of my Vineyard, come hither,*  
*here's a Fig-tree hath stood these three*  
*Years in my Vineyard, and hath at every*  
*season disappointed my expectation; for*  
*I have looked for Fruit in vain: Cut it*  
*down,*



above my patience. It soon outlasts  
 what in this *Fig-tree* no longer will hold  
 long. And now he begins to shake the  
 tree with his threatnings & fetch out  
 Death. Now the Life is Death, Death there-  
 fore is called for. Death comes for  
 me the *Fig-tree*. And withal the Lord  
 shakes the Sinner, and whips him upon  
 Sick-Beds, saying, Take him Death,  
 hath abused my Patience, and For-  
 giveness, not remembering that it should  
 have led him to Repentance, and not  
 to this destruction. Death fetch this barren  
 Fig-tree to Hell. At this, Death does  
 with Grim looks into the Chamber,  
 and Hell follows with him to the Bed-  
 and both strike this Professor in the face,  
 begin to lay Hands upon him, & im-  
 miting him with pains in his Body, &  
 Head-ach, Heart-ach, Back-ach, Short-  
 ness of Breath, Painful Qualms, Trem-  
 ling of Joints, Stopping at the Che-  
 and almost all the Symptoms of a Man  
 all recovery. Now while Death is  
 tormenting the Body, Hell is doing  
 the Mind and Conscience; striking  
 with its Pains, casting sparks of Fire  
 thither, wounding with sorrows &

fears of everlasting damnation, the Spirit of this poor creature: And now he begins to bethink himself, and to cry to God for Mercy; *Lord, spare me, Lord, spare me.* Nay, saith God, you have been a Provocation to me *these three years.* How many times have you disappointed me? How many seasons have you spent in vain? How many Sermons and other Mercies did I of my Patience afford you? but to no purpose at all, *saith him, Death.* O good Lord, saith the Sinner, Spare me but *this once*; Raise me but *this once.* Indeed I have been a barren Professor, and have stood to no purpose at all in thy Vineyard: But spare! O spare *this one time,* I beseech thee, and I will be better. *Away, away,* you will not. I have tried you *these three years* already, you are nought; if I should recover you again, you would be as bad as you was before (and all this while Death stands by.) The Sinner cries again, Good Lord, try me *once,* let me get up again *this once,* and see if I do not mend. But will you promise me to mend? Yes indeed, Lord, I vow it too; I will never be so bad again, *I will be better.* Well, saith God,

*Death*, let this Professor alone for this  
*time*. I will try him a while longer, he  
 hath promised, he hath *sworn* that he  
 will amend his ways. It may be he will  
 mind to keep his Promises. *Vows* are  
 solemn things, it may be he may *swear*  
*break his Vows*. Arise from off thy Bed  
 and now *God takes down his Axe*. At this  
 the poor Creature is very thankful  
 praises God, and fawns upon him, then  
 as if he did it heartily, and calls to  
 others to thank him too. He therefore  
 riseth as one would think, to be a new  
 creature indeed. But by that he has  
 put on his clothes, is come down from  
 his bed, and ventured into the Yard, or  
 Shop, and there sees how all things are  
 gone to Sixes and Sevens. He begins to  
 have *second thoughts*: and says to his  
 folks, What have you all been doing?  
 How are all things out of order? I am  
 I cannot tell what behind-hand; or  
 may see if a Man be but a little a to-fo-fo  
 that you have neither Wisdom, nor  
 Prudence to order things: And now,  
 instead of seeking to spend the rest of  
 time to God, he *doubteth his Diligence*  
*for this World*. Alas, all must not be lost  
 we must have provident Care: and the

quite forgetting the Sorrows of Death, the pains of Hell, the Promises and Vows which he made to God to be better: *Because Judgment was not (now) speedily executed, therefore the Heart of this poor Creature is fully set in him to do Evil.*

These things proving ineffectual, God takes hold of his Ax again, sends Death to a Wife, to a Child, to his Cattel, *your young Aden have I slain, and taken away your horses, Amos 4. 9. 10.* I will smite him, grieve him, disappoint him, and cast him down, and will set my self against him, *in all that he putteth his Hand unto.* At this the poor Barren Professor cries out again, Lord, I have sinned, spare me once more, I beseech thee. O take not away the desire of mine Eyes, spare my Children, bless them in my labours, and I will mend and be better. No, saith God, you lyed to me all time, I will trust you in this no longer, and withal he tumbleth the Wife, the Child, the Estate, into a grave.

And then returns to his place, till this Professor more unfeignedly acknowledge his offence, *Hes. 5. 14. 15.*

At this the poor creature is afflicted and distressed, Rents his Cloaths, and begins to call the breaking of his Promise

and Vows to mind, he mourns and Prays, and like *Abab*, a while walks softly, at the remembrance of the justice of the hand of God upon him. And now he renews his Promises; Lord, *give me this one time more*, take off thy hand and see; They go far that never turn Well, God spareth him again, sets down his *Axe* again; *Many times He did deliver them, but they provoked him with their Counsel, and were brought low for their Iniquities*, Psal. 106. 43. Now they seem to be thankful again, and are as if they were resolved to be Godly indeed. Now they Read, they Pray, they go to Meetings, and seem to be serious a pretty while, but at last they forget. Their Lusts prick them, suitable Temptations present themselves: wherefore they turn to their own crooked ways again. Psal. 78. 34, 36. *When he slew them, they sought him, and returned early after God, nevertheless they did flatter him with mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue.*

4. Yet again, The Lord will not leave this Professor, but will take up his *Axe* again, and will put him under a more heart-searching Ministry, a Ministry that

shall search him, and turn him over and over; a Ministry that shall meet with him, as *Elijah* met with *Ahab*, in all his acts of Wickedness (and *Now the Ax is laid to the Roots of the Trees.*) Besides, this Ministry doth not only search the Heart, but presenteth the Sinner with the Golden rays of the glorious Gospel; *Now is Christ Jesus set forth evidently*, now is Grace displayed sweetly; Now, now are the Promises broken like Boxes of Ointment to the perfuming of the whole room. But alas, there is yet no Fruit on this Fig-tree. While his Heart is searching, he wrangles; while the glorious Grace of the Gospel is unavailing, this Professor wags and is wanton, gathers up some scraps thereof, Tastes the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, Jude 4. Drinketh in the Rain that comes oft upon him, Heb. 6. 3--8. But bringeth not forth Fruit meet for him, whose Gospel it is; takes no heed to walk in the Law of the Lord God of Israel with all his Heart, 2 Kin. 10. 31. but counteth that the Glory of the Gospel consisteth in talk and shew, and that our Obedience thereto, is a matter of Speculation; that good Works lie in good Words, and

## 38 The Eastern Fig-tree.

if they can finely talk, they think they *travels*, please God. They think the Kingdom of God consisteth only in Word, not in Power: and thus prove it ineffectual this *Fair* Means also.

5. Well, Now the *2d* begins to be heaved higher, for now indeed God is ready to smite the Sinner, yet before he will strike the stroke, he will try one way more at the last, and if that mis-  
*seth, down goes the Fig-tree.*

Now the last way is to *try and strive with you* Pro-  
*fessor by his Spirit.*

Wherefore the Spirit of the Lord is now come to him. But *not always to strive with Men,* Gen.

6. 8. yet a while he will strive with him.

he will *awaken*, he will *convince*, he will

call to remembrance former Sins, former

Judgments, the breach of former Vow

and Promises, the mispending of former

Days; he will also present persuasive

Arguments, encouraging Promises,

dreadful Judgments, the *shortness* of

time to repent in; and that there is hope

if he come. Further, he will shew

him the certainty of Death, and of the

Judgment to come; yea, He will *pull*

and strive with this Sinner. But, be-  
*hold, the mischief now lies here, here*



is tugging and striving on both sides. The Spirit convinces, the Man turns a deaf Ear to God; the Spirit saith, Receive my Instruction and live; but the Man pulls away his Shoulder; the Spirit tells him whither he is going, but the Man closeth his Eyes against it; the Spirit offereth violence, the Man strives and resists. *They have done despite unto the Spirit of Grace,* Heb. 10. 29. The Spirit speaketh a second time, and urgeth Reasons of a new nature; But the Sinner answereth, No, I have loved strangers, and *from them I will go,* Amos 4. 8, 9, 10, 11. At this God's Fury comes up into his Face, now he comes out of his holy Place, and is terrible: now He sweareth in his Wrath, *they shall never enter into his Rest,* Ezek. 14. 13. I exercised towards you my Patience, yet you have not turned unto me, saith Lord. I smote you in your Person, in your Relations, in your Estate; yet you have not returned unto me, saith the Lord. *In thy filthiness is lewdness, because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged; thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness, thy stone, till I have my Envy to cast upon thee. Out it is, why doth it cumber the ground?*

The Second Sign, That such a Professor is almost (if not quite) past Grace is, When God hath given him over, or left him alone, and suffers him to do any thing, and that without controul, helpeth him not either in Works of Holiness, or in Straits and Difficulties. Ephraim is joy-  
ned to Idols, let him alone, Hos. 4. 17. We  
be to them when I depart from them. I will  
laugh at their Calamities, and will mock when  
their Fear cometh, Prov. 1. 24, 25, 26,  
27, 28.

Barren Fig-tree, thou hast heretofore  
been digged about, and dunged, Gods  
Mattock hath heretofore been at thy  
Roots, Gospel-dung hath heretofore been  
applied to thee; thou hast heretofore  
been strove with, convinced, awakened,  
made to taste and see, and cry, O the  
Blessedness! Thou hast heretofore been  
met with under the Word; thy Heart  
hath melted, thy Spirit hath fallen, thy  
Soul hath trembled, and thou hast felt  
something of the Power of the Gospel.  
But thou hast sinned, thou hast pro-  
voked the Eyes of his Glory, thy Iniqui-  
ty is found to be hateful, and now per-

haps God hath left thee, given thee up,  
and lets thee alone.

Heretofore thou wast tender, thy Conscience startled at the temptation to Wickedness, for thou wert taken off from the pollutions of the World, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 22. but that very Mire that once thou wert turned from, now thou lappellst up (with the Dog in the Proverb) again, and that very Mire that once thou seemest to lie washed from, in that very Mire thou now art rumbling afresh. But to particularize, there are three Signs of a Man's being given over of God.

1. When he is let alone in Sinning, when the reins of his Lusts are loosed, and he given up to them. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate Mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, Rom. 1. 28, 29. Seest thou a Man that heretofore had the knowledge of God, and that had some awe of Majesty upon him; I say, seest thou such an one, sporting himself in his own Decrevings, Rom. 1. 30, 31. turning the Grace of our God

160 The Barren Fig-tree.

God into Lasciviousness, and walking after his own ungodly Lusts: his Judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and his Damnation slumbereth not, 2 Pet. 13. Dost thou hear, barren Professor? It is astonishing to see, how those who once seemed Sons of the Morning, and were making Preparations for Eternall Life, now at last, for the rottenness of their Hearts, by the just Judgment of God, to be permitted being past feeling to give themselves over unto Lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, Eph. 4. 18, 19. A great number such were in the first Gospel-days; against whom Peter, and Jude, and John pronounceth the heavy Judgment of God. Peter and Jude couple them with the fallen Angels, 2 Pet. 2. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and John forbids that prayer be made for them, because that is happened unto them, that hath happened to the Angels that fell, Jude 5, 6, 7, 8. Who for forsaking their first State, and for leaving their own Habitation, are reserved in Chains, under ever lasting Darkness, unto the Judgment of the great Day. Barren Fig-tree, dost thou hear?

First, These are beyond all Mercy.

Secondly,

These are beyond all Pro-  
 mises of the Holy Spirit, and all the

of the Holy Spirit. These are beyond all hopes of  
 Repentance, and all the

of the Holy Spirit. These have no Interest for,  
 nor any more share in a Sacrifice for Sin.

For these there remains nothing  
 but a staring looking for of Judgment.

Starkly, Wherefore these are the true  
 Vagabonds and Vagabonds, (that being

left of God, of Christ, of Grace, and of  
 the Holy Spirit; and being beyond all hope,

struggle to and fro, even  
 with the Devil, their Associate, until their

shall come to die, or until they de-  
 pend in Battle, and perish.

Wherefore they are Jet alone in  
 the world, and if these at any time come un-  
 der the Word, there is for them no God,

no favour of the means of Grace, no  
 workings of Heart, no pity for themselves,

no love to their own Salvation. Let  
 them look on this hand of that; there

is no such effects of the Word in  
 them, as produceth Signs of Repen-

tance, and Love to God and his Christ,  
 These Men only have their Backs bowed down

under the Word. These Men only,  
 have

have the Spirit of sanctification, that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear to this very day, Eccl. 8. 10. Wherefore as they go to the place of the Holy Sepulchre from the place of the Holy and soon are forgotten in the places where they so did. Only they reap this damage. They treasure up Wrath against the day of Wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Rom. 2. 3, 4, 5. Look to it, barren Professor. 10. 10. 10. 10.

3. If he be visited after the common way of Mankind, either with Sickness, Distress, or any kind of Calamity, if no God appeareth, no sanctifying Hand of God, no special Mercy is mixed with the Affliction. But he falls sick, and grows well, like the Beast; or is under distress, as Saul, who when he was engaged by the Philistines, was forsaken and left of God. 1 Sam. 28. 4, 5, 6. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched to Gilboa: And when Saul saw the Host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his Heart greatly troubled. And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him in no more, neither by Dream, nor by Urim.

by Prophets. The Lord answered him no more. He had done with him, cast him off, and rejected him, and left him to stand and fall with his Sins by himself. But of this more in the Conclusion, therefore I here forbear.

These Men may go whither they will, do what they will, they may range from Opinion to Opinion, from Notion to Notion, from Sect to Sect, but are steadfast no where, they are left to their own Uncertainties; they have not Grace to establish their Hearts, and though some of them have boasted themselves of this Liberty, yet Jude calls them wandering Stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever, Jude 13. They are left, as I told you before, to be Fugitives and Vagabonds in the Earth, to wander every where, but to abide no where, until they shall descend to their own place. (Acts 1. 5.) with Cain and Judas, Men of the same fate with themselves.

A Third Sign that such a Professor is quite past Grace, is, When his heart is grown so hard, so stony and impenetrable, that nothing will pierce it.

Barren  
Fig-





## The Barren Fig-tree. 105

come of him, yet he cannot repent; he pulled away his Shoulder before, he stopped his Ears before, he shut up his Eyes before, and in this very posture God left him, and so he stands to this very Day. I have had a fancy, that Lot's Wife, when she was turned into a Pillar of Salt, (Gen. 19. 26.) stood yet looking over her Shoulder, or else with her Face towards Sodom; as the Judgment caught her, so it bound her, and left her a Monument of God's Anger to after-Generations.

We read of some that are *fear'd with an hot Iron*, and that are *past feeling*, for so *fear'd Persons*, in *fear'd Parts* are: Their *Conscience is fear'd*, 1 Tim. 4. 2. The Conscience is the thing that must be touched with feeling fear and remorse, if ever any good be done with the Sinner. How then can any good be done to those whose Conscience is *worse than that, that is fast asleep in sin*, Eph. 4. 19. For that Conscience that is fast asleep, may yet be effectually awakened and saved; but that Conscience that is *fear'd*, dried, as it were, into a *Cinder*, can never have sense, feeling, or the least regret in this World. *Barren Fig-tree, barren, judicial*

*cial hardening is dreadful.* There is a difference betwixt that hardness of Heart that is incident to all Men, and that which comes upon some as a signal or special Judgment of God: and although all kind of hardness of Heart, in some sense, may be called a Judgment, yet to be hardened with this *second* kind, is a Judgment peculiar only to them that perish; an hardness that is sent as a punishment, *for the abuse of Light received, for a reward of Apostacy.*

This *Judicial* hardness is discovered from that which is incident to all Men, in these Particulars:

1. It is an hardness that comes after some great Light received; *Because of some great Sin committed against that Light, and the Grace that gave it.* Such hardness as Pharaoh had, after the Lord had wrought wonderously before him: Such hardness as the Gentiles had, a hardness which darkened the Heart, a hardness which made their Minds reprobate. This hardness is also the same with that the Hebrews are cautioned to beware of, (*Heb. 3. 7, &c.*) an hardness that is caused by Unbelief, and a departing from the Living God; an hardness compleated thro

the deceitfulness of Sin: Such as that in the Provocation, of whom God sware, that they should not enter into his Rest. It was this kind of *hardness* also that both *Cain*, and *Ishmael*, and *Esau* were hardened with, after they had committed their great Transgressions.

2. It is the greatest kind of *Hardness*, and hence they are said to be *Harder than a Rock*, Jer. 5. 3. or than an *Adamant*, Zec. 7. 13. that is, *harder than Flint*. So hard that nothing can enter.

3. It is an *Hardness* given in much anger, and that to bind the Soul up in an impossibility of Repentance.

4. It is an *Hardness* therefore which is incurable, of which a Man must die and be damned. *Barrell Professor, hear unto this.*

3d Fourth Sign that such a Professor is quite past Grace, is, when he fortifies his hard Heart against the tenour of Gods Words, 1 Joh 9. 4, &c. This is called *hardening themselves against God, and turning of the Spirit against him*. As thus, When after a Profession of Faith in the Lord Jesus, and of the Doctrine that is according to Godliness, they shall en-  
bolder



those that will assuredly be too hard for him.

Now this Judgment is much effected, when God hath given a Man up unto Satan, and hath given Satan leave, with-  
out fail, to compleat his destruction. I say, When God hath given Satan leave ef-  
fectually to compleat his destruction: For all that are delivered up unto Satan, have not, nor do not come to this End: But that is the Man, whom God shall sepa-  
rate to Evil, and shall deliver in the Hands of Satan, to compleat, without fail, his destruction.

Thus he served Ahab, a Man, that sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, 1 Kin. 21. 25. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And on such on this manner, and another said on this manner: And there came forth a Spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. 1 Kin. 22. 20, 21, 22. And the Lord said unto him, Where- with? And he said, I will go forth, and be a lying Spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt per-  
suade him, and prevail also, go forth, and say: Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail,

prevail, do thy Will, I leave him in thy Hand, Go forth, and do so.

Wherefore in these Judgments, the Lord doth much concern himself for the management thereof, because of the Provocation wherewith they have provoked him. This is the Man, whose *Ruin contriveth, and bringeth to pass by his own contrivance.* I will chuse their delusions for them; I will bring their fears upon them. Isa. 46. 4. I will chuse their Devices, or the Wickednesses that their Hearts are contriving of. I even I, will cause them to be accepted of, and delight in to them. But who are they that must thus be feared? Why, those among Professors, that have chosen *their own Way*, those whose Soul delighteth in their Abominations.

Because they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved; for the cause God shall send them strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lye, that they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in Unrighteousness.

God shall send them. ] It is a great word. Yes, God shall send them strong Delusions, Delusions that shall do, that shall make them believe a Lye. Why so? The



They all might be damned, every one of them, who believe not the Truth, but had pleasure in Unrighteousness. 2 Thess. 5, 10, 11,

There is nothing more provoking to the Lord, than for a Man to promise, when God threatneth; for a Man to be light of conceit, that he shall be safe; and yet to be more wicked than in former days: This Man's Soul abhorreth the Truth of God, no marvel therefore God's Soul abhorreth him: he hath invented a way contrary to God, to bring about his own Salvation; no marvel, therefore, if God invent a way to bring about this Man's Damnation: And being that these Rebels are at this point, we shall have peace; God will see whose Word shall stand, His or theirs.

A Fifth Sign of a Man being past Grace, When he shall at the, scoff, and inwardly grin, and fret against the Lord, secretly purposing to continue his course, and put all to the venture, despising the Messengers of the Lord. He that despised Moses's Law, died without Mercy; of how much sorer Punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under



that shall cut it down. Death, which is the  
*that shall cut it down.* which is the  
 to take the Barren Fig-tree out of the

Two things are here to be con-  
 sidered.

1. The Executioner, *Thou*, the great,  
 the dreadful, the eternal God. There

words therefore, as I have already said,  
 signify that Christ the Mediator, through  
 whom alone Salvation comes, and by  
 whom alone Execution hath been defer-

*Now giveth up the Soul,* forbears to  
 speak one Syllable more for him, or to  
 the least Act of Grace further, to try  
 his Recovery; but delivereth him up  
 to that fearful Dispensation, *To fall into*  
*the hand of the living God,* Heb. x.

2. The Second to be considered, is,  
 The Instrument by which this Execution is  
 done, and that is Death, compared here  
 to an Ax; and forasmuch as the Tree  
 is not felled at one Blow, therefore the  
 strokes are here continued, till all the  
 knots be struck at it that are requisite  
 to its falling; For now cutting-time, and  
 cutting-work is come, cutting must be his  
 portion, till he be cut down. *After that*  
*thou*

## 114 The Barren Fig-tree

thou shalt cut it down.] Death; I say, is the *Ax*, which God often useth, therewith to take the *Barren Fig-tree* out of the Vineyard; out of a Profession, and all out of the World at once. But this *Ax* is now new-ground, it cometh well-edged to the Roots of this *Barren Fig-tree*. It hath been whetted by Sin, by the Law, and by a formal Profession, and therefore must, and will make deep gashes, not only in the natural life, but in the Heart and Conscience also of this Professor. *The wages of Sin is Death, the sting of Death is Sin, 1 Cor. 15.* Wherefore Death comes not to this Man as he doth to Saints, muzzled, or without his Sting, but with open Mouth, in all his strength yea, he sends his First born, which is guilt, to devour his strength, and to bring him to the King of Terrors, Job 18. 13.

14. But to give you, in a few Particulars, the manner of this Man's dying.

1. Now he hath his fruitless *Branches* be-  
leaguer him round his Bed, together with all the Bands and Legions of his other wickedness. *His own Iniquities shall raise up the wicked himself, and he shall be holden in the Cords of his Sins, Prov. 5. 22.*

2. Now

2. Now some terrible discovery of God is made out unto him, to the perplexing and terrifying of his guilty Conscience, God shall cast upon him, and we spare not, and he shall be afraid of that which is high, Job. 27. 22.

3. The dark Entry he is to go thro, will be a sore amazement to him; For he shall be in the way, Eccl. 12. 5. yea Terrors will take hold on him, when he shall see the yawning Jaws of Death to gape upon him, and the Doors of the Shadow of Death open to give him passage out of the World; Now who will meet me in this dark Entry; how shall I pass through this dark Entry into another World?

4. For by reason of Guilt, and a shaking Conscience, *His Life will hang in continual doubt before him, and he shall be afraid day and night*, Deut. 28. 66, 67. and shall have no assurance of his Life.

5. Now also *War* will come up against him, he will come up like an armed Man. This is a terrible Army to him that is graceless in Heart, and fruitless in Life. This *War* will continually cry in thine Ears, here is a New Birth wanting, a new Heart, and a new Spirit

to *unavoidable* *sinning*; here is *Love* and *Repentance*; here is the *Fear of God*; and a good *Conversation*; *Then* *are* *weighed* *in the Balance*, and *are found wanting*. Dan. 5. 27.

6. Together with these, *handeth by the companions of Devils*, *Death and Hell*, *Death and Devils*, *Death and endless Torment* in the everlasting flames of *devouring Fire*. *When God shall come up with the people*, he will *visit them with his Wrath*. Hab. 3. 18.

But how will this *Man* *die*? Can his *Heart* *endure*, or can his *Hand* *be strong*? Ezek. 22. 14.

1. *God*, and *Christ*, and *Pity* *have left him*: *Sun* *against* *Light*, *against* *Mercy*, and the *Long-suffering of God*, *is* *come up against him*; his *Hope* and *Confidence* *now lie a dying by him*, and his *Conscience* *totters and shakes continually* within him.

2. *Death* is at his work, *Carriage of him down*, *hewing both Bark and Heart*, *both Body and Soul allunder*; The *Man* *groans*, but *Death* *hears him not*; He *looks gally*, *carefully*, *dejectedly*; he *sighs*, he *sweats*, he *trembles*, but *Death* *matters nothing*.

3. *Fearful*

## The Barren Fig-tree. 217

3. Fearful *Cogitations* haunt him, misgivings, direful apprehensions of God terrify him. Now he hath time to think what the loss of Heaven will be, and what the torments of Hell will be; now he looks no way but he is frightened.

4. Now would he live, but may not; he would live, though it were but the life of a Bed-ridden Man, but must not. He that cuts him down, sways him, as the Feller of Wood, sways the tottering Tree; now this way, then that, at last a Root breaks, an Heart-string, an Eye-string snaps assunder.

5. And now, could the Soul be *annihilated* or brought to nothing, how happy would it count it self; but it sees that may not be. Wherefore it is put to a wonderful strait: stay in the Body it may not, go out of the Body it dares not. Life is going, the Blood settles in the *Flesh*, and the *Lungs* being no more able to draw Breath through the Nostrils; at last out goes the weary trembling Soul, who is immediatly seized by Devils, who lay lurking in every hole in the Chamber for that very purpose: His Friends take care of the Body, wrap it up in the Sheet or Coffin; but the Soul is



## 118 The Barren Fig-tree.

out of their thought and reach, going  
down to the Chambers of Death.

I had thought to have enlarged, but  
I forbear: God, who teaches Man to  
profit, bless this brief and plain Dis-  
course to thy Soul, who yet standest a  
Professor in the Land of the Living,  
among the Trees of his Garden. *Amen.*

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**FINIS.**



**A N  
EXHORTATION  
T O  
P E A C E and U N I T Y.**

**Ephes. 4. 3.**

*Indeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

**B**eloved, Religion is the great Bond of humane Society; and it were well if it self were kept within the Bond of Unity; and that it may so be, let us according to the Text, use our utmost endeavors to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.

## An Exhortation

These words contain a Counsel and a Caution: the Counsel is, *That we endeavour the Unity of the Spirit*; the Caution is, *That we do it in the Bond of Peace*: as if he should say, I would have you live in Unity, but yet I would have you to be careful, that you do not purchase Unity with the breach of Charity.

Let us therefore be cautioned that we do not so press after Unity in Practice and Opinion, as to break the Bond of Peace and Affection.

In the handling of these words, I shall observe this method;

First, I shall open the Sense of the Text.

Secondly, I shall shew wherein this Unity and Peace consists.

Thirdly, I shall shew you the Fruits and Benefits of it, together with nine Inconveniencies and Mischiefes that attend those Churches where Unity and Peace is wanting.

Fourthly, and lastly, I shall give you twelve Directions and Motives for the obtaining of it.

First,

First, As touching the Sense of the Text; when we are counselled to keep the Unity of the Spirit, we are not to understand the Spirit of God, as personally so considered, because the Spirit of God in that sense, is not capable of being divided; and so there would be no need for us to endeavor to keep the Unity of the Spirit.

By the Unity of the Spirit then, we are to understand, that Unity of Mind which the Spirit of God calls for, and requires Christians to endeavor after; hence it is that we are exhorted, by one Spirit, we be one Mind, one Spirit, one Lord, for the Unity of the Spirit, Phil. 1. 27.

But further, the Apostle in these words alludes to the state and composition of a Natural Body, and doth thereby inform us, that this Mystical Body of Christ holds an Analogy with the Natural Body of Man. As first, in the Natural Body there must be a Spirit to animate it, for the Body without the Spirit is dead, James 2. 26. So it is in the Mystical Body of Christ; the Apostle to the Ephesians tells us of the Body, but he speaks as of the Spirit, Eph. 4. 30.

Secondly, The Body hath Joints, and



## to Peace and Unity.

2

with the Mystical Body of Christ, how do divided Spirits break the Bonds of Peace, which are the Joynts of this Body? And how doth the breakings of the Body and Church of Christ, wound the Spirit of Christians, and oftentimes occasion the Spirit and Life of Christianity to languish, if not to expire? How needful is it then that we endeavour *the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace?*

I now come to shew you wherein this Unity and Peace consists, and this I shall demonstrate in five particulars.

1. This Unity and Peace may consist in the ignorance of many Truths, and in the holding of some Errors; or else this Duty of Peace and Unity could not be practicable by any on this side Perfection; but we must now endeavour the Unity of the Spirit, till we come to the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, *Ephes. 4. 13.* because now (as the Apostle saith) we know in part, and we prophesy in part, and now we see through a Glass darkly, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* And as this is true in general, so we may find it true if we descend to particular Instances; the Disciples seem to be ignorant of that great Truth

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which

which they had often, and in much plainness been taught by their Master once and again (*viz.*) That his Kingdom was not of this World, and that in the World they should suffer, and be persecuted, yet in the first of the *Acts*, *ver. d.* we read, That they asked of him if he would at this time restore the Kingdom to *Israel*? thereby discovering that Christ's Kingdom (as they thought) should consist in his Temporal Jurisdiction over *Israel*, which they expected should now commence and take place amongst them. Again, Our Lord tells them, that he had many things to say (and there were many important Truths) which they could not now bear. *John 16. 12.* And that there were important Truths, appears by the 10th and 11th Verses, where he is discoursing of *Righteousness* and *Judgement*, and then adds, that he had yet many things to say, which they could not bear; and thereupon promises the Comforter to lead them into ALL TRUTH; which implies, that they were yet ignorant of many Truths, and consequently held divers Errors; and yet for all this he prays for, and presses them to their great Du-



## to Peace and Unity.

7.

of Peace and Unity, *John 14:27* and  
*17:21*. To this may be added that of  
*John 8:12*, where the Author saith, He  
 had many things to say of the Priestly  
 Office of Christ, which by reason of  
 their dulness they were not capable to re-  
 ceive; as also that in the 10th of the  
 12th, where *Jesus* seems to be ignorant  
 of that Truth, viz. That the Gospel  
 was to be preached to all Nations; and  
 contrary hereto; he erred in thinking  
 it unlawful to preach amongst the *Gen-*  
*tils*. I shall add two Texts more, one  
*John 1:12* where we read, That those  
 Disciples which had been discipled and  
 baptized by *John*, were yet ignorant of  
 the Holy Ghost, and knew not (as the  
 Text tells us) whether there were any  
 Holy Ghost or no; though *John* did  
 teach constantly, That he that should  
 come after him, should baptize with the  
 Holy Ghost and Fire. From hence we  
 may easily and plainly infer, that Chri-  
 stians may be ignorant of many Truths,  
 by reason of weak and dull Capacities,  
 and other such-like Impediments; even  
 while those Truths are with much plain-  
 ness delivered to them. Again, We  
 read, *Heb. 5:13*. of some that were un-  
 skill-

skillful in the Word of Righteousness, who nevertheless are call'd Babes in Christ; and with whom Unity and Peace is to be inviolably kept and maintained.

2. As this Unity and Peace may consist in the ignorance of many Truths, and in the holding some Errors, such must consist with (and it cannot consist without) the believing and professing those things which are necessary to Salvation and Church Communion; and they are, First, Believing that Christ the Son of God died for the Sins of Men. Secondly, That whoever believed, ought to be baptized: The third thing essential to this Communion, is a holy and blameless Conversation.

First, That believing that the Son of God died for the Sins of Men, is necessary to Salvation, I prove by these Texts, which tell us that he that doth not believe, shall be damned, *Mark 16. 16.* *John 3. 36.* *Rom 10. 15.* *1 Cor 15. 2.*

That it is also necessary to Church Communion, appears from *Mat. 18. 18.* *17.* *28.* After having confess that Christ was the Son of the Living God, Christ thereupon assures Peter, that upon the Rock, viz. this Profession of Faith, or

this

his Christ which Peter had confessed, he would Build his Church, and the Gates of Hell should not prevail against it. And *1 Cor. 3. 11*. The Apostle having told the *Corinthians* they were God's Building, presently adds, that they could not be built upon any Foundation but upon that which was laid, which was Jesus Christ. All which proves, that Christian Society is founded upon the profession of Christ; and not only Scripture, but the Lights of Right-reason dictate this, that some Rules and Orders must be observed for the founding of all Society, which must be consented to by all that will be of it. Hence it comes to pass, that to own Christ as the Lord and Head of Christians, is essential to the founding of Christian Society. *of 1000 or 10000*

Secondly; The Scriptures have declared that this Faith gives the Professors of it a right to Baptism, as in the case of the Eunuch, *Act. 8.* when he demanded why he might not be baptized? *Philip* answered, *That if he believed with all his heart, he might;* the Eunuch thereupon confessing Christ, was baptized.

Now that Baptism is essential to Church-Communion, I prove from *1 Cor.*

in Christ no where we shall find the Apostle labouring to prevent an evil use that might be made of Spiritual Gifts, it is thereby to be put up; and to think that such as wanted them, were not of the Body, go to be distressed Members; let them comfort themselves, that whoever did confess Christ, and own him for his Head, did it by the Spirit, *Gal. 3.* though they might not have such a visible manifestation of it as others had; and therefore they ought to be owned as Members, and appear so. *Gal. 3. 26.* And not only because they have called him Lord by the Spirit, but because they have by the guidance and direction of the same Spirit been baptized, *1 Cor. 12. 13.* *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body.* *1 Cor. 12. 13.* need not go about to confuse that Notion that some of late have had of this Term, *1 Cor. 12. 13.* That the Baptism here spoken of, is the Baptism of the Spirit, because you have not owned and declared that Notion at your Judgment, but on the contrary. All of you that I have ever conversed with, have declared it to be understood of Baptism with Water, by the direction of the Spirit: if so, then it follows, that Men and Women

are declared Members of Christ's Body by Baptism, and cannot be by Scripture reputed and esteemed so without it; which farther appears from *Rom. 6. 3.* where Men by Baptism are said to be planted into the likeness of his Death; and *Col. 2. 12.* We are said to be buried with him by Baptism; all which, together with the consent of all Christians, (some few in these late times excepted) do prove that Baptism is necessary to the Initiating Persons into the Church of Christ.

Thirdly, Holiness of Life is essential to Church-Communion, because it seems to be the reason why Christ founded a Church in the World, viz. that Men might thereby be watched over, and kept from falling; and that if any be overtaken with a Fault, he that is Spiritual might restore him.

That by this means Men and Women might be preserved without blame to the Church of Christ, and the Grace of God might be preserved in them, *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* And let every one that names the Name of the Lord, depart from Iniquity, *Tim. 2. 19.*  
And

And Peter tells us, (speaking of the Christian Religion) *That pure Religion and undefiled before God, is to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep our selves unspeckled from the World.* James I. 27. From all which (together with many more Texts that might be produced) it appears, that an unholy and prophane Life, is inconsistent with Christian Religion and Society. And that Holiness is essential to Salvation and Church-Communion; so that these three things, Faith, Baptism, and a Holy Life, as I said before, all Churches must agree and unite in, as those things, which when wanting, will destroy their being. And let not any think, that when I say, believing the Son of God died for the Sins of Men, is essential to Salvation and Church-Communion, that I hereby would exclude all other Articles of the Christian Creed; as not necessary, as the belief of the Resurrection of the Dead, and eternal Judgment, &c. which for want of time, I omit to speak particularly to, and the rather, because I understand this great Article of believing the Son of God died for the Sins of Men, is comprehensive of all others, and is the

from

from whence all other Articles may easily be inferred.

And here I would not be mistaken, as though I held there were nothing else for Christians to practise, when I say this is all that is requisite to Church-Communion; for I very well know that Christ requires many other things of us, after we are Members of his Body, which if we knowingly or maliciously refuse, may be the cause, not only of Excommunication, but Damnation: But yet these are such things as relate to the well-being, and not to the being of Churches; as laying on of Hands in the Primitive Times upon Believers, by which they did receive the Gifts of the Spirit; this (I say) was for the increase and edifying of the Body, and not that thereby they might become of the Body of Christ, for that they were before: And I do not think that I believe laying on of Hands was no Apostolical Institution, unless I say Men are not thereby made Members of Christ's Body, or because I think it is not essential to Church-Communion: Why should I be thought to be against a Fire in the Chimney, because I say it must not be in the Thatch

# of



of the House? Consider then how pernicious a thing it is to make every Doctrine (though true) the bond of Communion, this is that which destroys Unity, and by this Rule all Men must be perfect before they can be in Peace: For do we not see daily, that as soon as Men come to a clearer understanding the Mind of God (to say the best of, what they hold) than presently all Men are Excommunicable, or not Excommunicable, they do not agree with them; do not some believe and see, that to be Pride and Covetousness, which others do not, be cause (it may be) they have more narrowly and diligently searched into the Duty of these things than others have: what then? Must all Men that have no so large acquaintance, of their Duty herein be Excommunicated? Indeed it were to be wished that more moderation in Appointing and Settling Concernments were found among Churches: but God forbid, that if they should come short herein, that we should say, as one hath said, That he would not Communion with such a People, because they were proud and they were so in their Appointing and Settling of their Appointments.

Let me appeal to such, and demand of them if there was not a time since they believed and were baptized, where-  
 in they did not believe laying on of hands a Duty? and did they not then believe, and do they not still believe they were Members of the Body of Christ? And was not there a time when you did not so well understand the nature and extent of Pride and Covetousness as now you do? And did you not then believe, and do you not still believe that you were true Members of Christ, though less perfect? Why then should you not judge of those that differ from you herein, as you judged of your selves when you were as they now are? How needful then is it for Christians to distinguish (if ever they could be at *Peace and Unity*) between those truths which are essential to Church-Communion, and those that are not? *And*  
 Thirdly, *Unity and Peace* consists in making one Shoulder to practise and in execution the things we do know. *Gal. 3. 16. Nevertheless wherein we have*  
*agreed, let us walk by the same Rule, let us abide the same things.* How sad is it to see our Zeal consume us, and our precious Time, in things doubtful and disputable

table, while we are not concerned, nor affected with the practice of those indisputable things we all agree in? We all know Charity to be the great Commandment, and yet how few agree to practise it. We all know they that labour in the Word and Doctrine, are worthy of double Honour; and that God hath ordained that they which Preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel; that they have Duties; however others have cavil'd at them, I know you agree in them, and are perswaded of your Duty herein; but where's your Zeal to practise? O how well would it be with Churches, if they were but half as zealous for the great and plain, and indisputable Things, as the more chargeable and costly Things of Religion, as they are, for Things doubtful or less necessary, or for Things that are no charge to them, and cost them nothing but the breath of Contention, though that may be too great a price for the small things they purchase with it.

But further; Do we not all agree, that Men that preach the Gospel, should be paid like Workmen that need not be ashamed? and yet how little is this considered?

red by many Preachers, who never consider before they speak of what they say, or whereof they affirm? How few give themselves to study, that they may be approved? How few meditate and give themselves to these things, that their profiting may appear to all?

For the Lord's sake let us unite to practise those things we know; and if we would have more Talents, let us all agree to improve those we have.

See the Spirit that was among the Primitive Professors, that knowing and believing how much it concerned them in the propagating of Christianity, to shew forth Love to one another (that so all might know them to be Christ's Disciples) rather than there should be any complaining among them, they sold all they had! Oh how zealous were these in practice, and with one Shoulder to that that was upon their Hearts for good! I might further add, how often we agreed in our Judgment? and that it not been upon our Hearts, that this and the other Thing is good to be done, to enlighten the dark World, and repair the breaches of Churches, and to raise up those Churches that now

lie a gasping, and among whom the Spirit of Religion is expiring? But what we more than talk of them? Do we most decline these things, when they either call for their Purposes, or their Persons to help in this and such-like Works as these? Let us then, in what we kneele unite, that we may put it in practice remembring, that if we know the things, we shall be happy if we do them.

Fourthly: This Unity and Peace consists in our joyning and agreeing to perform, and to press after those Truths we do not know. The Disciples in the Primitive Times, were conscious of their Imperfections, and therefore they were ever accorded continued in Prayer and Supplications: If we were more in the sense of our own Ignorances and Imperfections, we should carry it better towards those that differ from us; then should abound more in the Spirit of Meekness and Forbearance, that thereby we might bring others (or be brought by others) to the knowledge of the Truth: this would make us go to God, and so with *Elihu* Job 34:32. *That which is new we have seen, and the old we have known.* *Heathens* *oil*

But all agree that we were erring in  
 any thing, we should soon agree to  
 to God, and pray for more Wisdom  
 and Revelation of his Mind and Will  
 concerning us. But here is our misery, that we no  
 longer receive any thing for Truth, but  
 presently ascend the Chair of Infal-  
 libility with it, as though in this we could  
 not err: Hence it is we are impatient of  
 contradiction, and become uncharitable  
 to those that are not of the same Mind;  
 we know a consciousness that we may  
 mistake, or that if my Brother err in  
 one thing, I may err in another, this  
 will unite us in Affection, and engage us  
 to press after Perfection, according to  
 that of the Apostle, Phil. 3. 13, 14, 15.  
 Brethren, Account not my self to have ap-  
 prehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting  
 those things that are behind, and reaching  
 on to those things which are before, I  
 press towards the Mark, for the prize of the  
 high Calling of God in Christ Jesus. And  
 in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God  
 shall reveal even this unto you. O then  
 that we could but unite and agree to go  
 to God for one another, in confidence  
 that he will teach us, and that if any  
 of

of us want Wisdom: (as who of us do not) we might agree to ask of God who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth no Man. Let us, like those people spoken of in the second of *Isaiah*, say one to another, Come, let us go to the Lord, for he will teach us of his Will, and we will walk in his Paths. *Isaiah 54:13*

Fifthly; This Unity and Peace mainly consists in Unity of Love and Affection; this is the great and indispensable Duty of all Christians; by this they are declared Christs Disciples: And hence it is that Love is called the Great Commandment, the Old Commandment, and the New Commandment; that which was commanded in the beginning, and will remain to the end, yea and after the end. *1 Cor. 13: 8*. Charity never faileth, but whether there be Tongues, they shall cease; or whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away. And, *verse 13*. And now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity; but the greatest of these is Charity. *1 Cor. 13: 13*. Above all these things put Charity, which is the Bond of Perfection. Because Charity is the end of the Commandment. *1 Tim. 1: 5*. Charity is therefore called the Royal Law; and though it had

super-



## to Peace and Unity. 21

Superintendency over other Laws, and doubtless is a Law to which other Laws must give place, when they come in competition with it; *Above all things therefore have fervent Charity among your selves, for Charity covereth a multitude of Sins,* 1 Pet. 4. 8. Let us therefore live in Unity and Peace, and the God of Love and Peace will be with us.

That you may so do, let me remember you (in the words of a learned Man) that the Unity of the Church, is a Unity of Love and Affection, and not a bare Uniformity of Practice and Opinion.

Having shewn you wherein this Unity consists, I now come to the third General Thing propounded; and that is, to shew you the Fruits and Benefits of Unity and Peace; together with the Mischiefs and Inconveniences that attend those Churches where Unity and Peace is wanting.

First, Unity and Peace is a Duty well-pleasing to God, who is stiled the Author of Peace, and not of Confusion in all the Churches, God's Spirit rejoyceth in the Unity of our Spirits; but on the other hand, where Strife and Divisions

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are,

here, where the Spirit of God is grieved.  
 Hence it is that the Apostle no sooner  
 calls upon the Ephesians, not to grieve  
 the Spirit of God, but he presently sub-  
 joins us a Remedy against that evil, *That*  
*they put away bitterness and evil speaking,*  
*and be kind one to another, and tender-*  
*hearted, forgiving one another, even as*  
*God for Christs sake hath forgiven them,*  
*Eph. 4. 30, 32.*

Secondly, As Unity and Peace is plea-  
 sing to God, and rejoiceth his Spirit, so  
 it rejoiceth the Hearts and Spirits of  
 Gods People; Unity and Peace brings  
 Heaven down upon Earth among us:  
 Hence it is that the Apostle tells us, *Rom.*  
*15. 13.* That the Kingdom of God is one  
*God and Father, but Righteousness and*  
*Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. Where*  
*Unity and Peace is, there is Heaven up-*  
*on Earth; by this we taste the first Fruits*  
*of that blessed Estate we shall one day*  
*live in the fruition of; when we shall*  
*come to the general Assembly and Church*  
*of the First-born, whose Names are written*  
*in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all,*  
*and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect.*  
*Heb. 12. 23.*

This other doctrine of the Church (as the  
learned Men observe) which have  
of Conscience, and intruding into the  
ings of God's Church, into Treasures of Mon-  
ification and Persecution. And the Plaine  
And the Plaine it tells us that it is not  
only good, but profitable for Brethren to  
dwell together in Unity. (Math. 18. 20.)  
Where Unity and Peace is wanting,  
there are Scornes and Troubles, to be  
Fury and Strife, and many things, and  
many things, which are hard. It is the out-  
ward Peace of the Church that is the most  
with Unwilling Joy, and the Peace of  
God. How gives us occasion to be our  
own with gladness in our own Houses,  
and in the Church. The Plaine it tells us  
in the Church. The Unity and Peace of the  
Church makes Communion of Saints de-  
sirable. What is it that makes the Church  
unpleasant, and makes it burdensome,  
but Divisions? Have you not heard many  
complain that they are weary of Church  
Communion, because of Church Conton-  
tion? But now where Unity and Peace is,  
there Christians long for Communion.  
David said that he was glad when  
they said unto him, Let us go to the House  
of God. Psal. 134. Why was this, but  
because

because (as the third verse tells us) *Ye  
misfeared the City compassed together, when  
the Tribes went up, the Tribes of the Lord,  
to give thanks to his Name.* And David  
speaking of the Man that was once his  
Friend, doth thereby let us know the be-  
nefits of Peace and Unity; *Psalms 124.  
We (saith he) did dwell in brotherly  
company, and walked to the House of God in company.*  
Where Unity is strongest, Communion is  
sweetest and most desirable. You see  
then that Peace and Union fills the People  
of God with desires after Communion:  
But on the other hand, hear how David  
complains, *Psalms 20. We were in  
Mesek, and the Devil in the state of  
Kedar.* The Psalmist here is thought to  
allude to a Host of Men that dwell in  
the desert of Arabia, that got their li-  
vings by Contention; and therefore he  
adds, *verse 5. That his Soul had long  
desired them that loved Peace.* This was  
that which made him long for the Courts  
of God, and esteem one day in his  
House better than a thousand; this made  
his Soul even faint for the House of God,  
because of the peace of it; *they blessed are  
they (saith he) that dwell in thy House,  
they will be still praising thee.* There is a cer-  
tain

tain note of discord, as appears, **Mat**  
 where we read of Primitive Christians  
 meeting with one accord, praising God!

Fourthly, Where Unity and Peace is,  
 there many Mallicies and Inconveniences  
 are prevented, which attends those People  
 where Peace and Unity is wanting.  
 And of those many that might be men-  
 tioned, I shall briefly insist upon these

First, Where Unity and Peace is wan-  
 ting, there is much precious time spent  
 to no purpose. How many Days are  
 spent, and how many fruitless Journeys  
 made to no profit, where the People are  
 not in peace? How often have many re-  
 ceived time (even in Seed-time and  
 Harvest) when they could scarce afford  
 it, to go to Church, and, by reason of  
 their Divisions, come home worse than  
 they went, repenting they have spent so  
 much precious time to so little benefit?  
 How did it to see Men spend their pre-  
 cious time, in which they should work  
 out their Salvation, by labouring as in the  
 Fire, to prove an uncertain and doubt-  
 ful Proposition; and to trifle away their  
 time, in which they should make their  
 Calling and Election sure, to make sure

of our Opinions which when they have  
done all they are not infallibly sure  
whether it be true or no, nor can all  
things necessary to Salvation and Church  
Communion are plainly laid down in  
Scripture in which we may be infallibly  
sure of the Truth of them; but for  
other things that we have no plain Text  
for, but the Truth of them depends  
upon our Interpretations. Here we must  
be cautioned that we do not spend much  
time in imposing the solemn iudicium  
venting those among us that are unlearned  
can assume Infallibility, we should not  
spend time upon vanities, and when  
ever you see their faces abroad, and when  
open their Bristle of alligence shall be  
seen, and to their foreheads shall be  
many Churches spend much of their time in  
Jangling and Contending about those  
things which are neither essential to  
Salvation or Church Communion, such  
that which is spent about such should  
for Questions which they are never able  
to give an infallible solution of. But  
now where Unity and Peace is, here our  
time is spent in praising God and in  
those great Questions, What we should  
do to be saved? and how to keep by the

holy and more humble towards God, and more charitable and more serviceable to one another?

Secondly, Where Unity and Peace is wanting, there is evil surmizing, and evil-speaking to the damage and disgrace, if not to the ruining of one another. *Gal. 3: 12, 13. The whole Law is fulfilled in charity. Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. But if you have not done this charity, shall ye be justified out of the Law? No sooner the Bond of Charity is broken, which is as a Wall about Christians, but soon they begin to make havoc and spoil of one another, then there is raising evil Reports, and taking up evil Reports against each other. Hence it is that whispering and backbiting proceeds, and going from House to House to blazon the faults and infirmities of others; Hence it is that we watch for the failings of our neighbours, and do not inwardly rejoice at the misfortune of others; saying, in our Hearts, Ah, ah, so we would have it. But now where Unity and Peace is, there is Charity; and where Charity is, there we are willing to hide the Faults, and cover the nakedness of one Brethren.*



*Charity thinketh no evil,* 1 Cor. 13. 5. And therefore it cannot surmize, neither will it speak evil.

21 Thirdly, Where Unity and Peace is wanting, there can be no great matter enterprized, we cannot do much for God, nor much for one another; when the Devil would hinder the bringing to pass of good in Nations and Churches, he divides their Councils, (and as one well observes) he divides their Heads, that he may divide their Hands; when Jacob had prophesied of the cruelty of Simeon and Levi, who were Brethren, he threatens them with the consequence of it, *Gen. 49. 7. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* The Devil is not to learn that Maxim he hath taught the Machavilians of the World, *divide & impera*, divide and rule, it is a united force that's formidable: Hence the Spouse in the *Canticles* is said to be but one, and the only one of her Mother, *Cant. 6. 9.* Hereupon it is said of her, *ver. 10. That she is terrible as an Army with Banners.* What can a divided Army do, or a disordered Army, that have lost their Banners, or for fear or shame thrown them away? In like manner,

nor, What can Christians do for Christ, and the enlarging his Dominion in the World, in bringing Men from darkness to light, while themselves are divided and disordered? Peace is to Christians, as great Rivers are to some Cities, which (besides other Benefits and Commodities) are natural Fortifications; by reason whereof those places are made impregnable; but when, by the subtilty of an Adversary, or the folly of the Citizens, these Waters come to be divided into little petty Rivulets, How soon are they assailed and taken? Thus it fares with Churches, when once the Devil or their own folly divides them, they will be so far from resisting of him, that they will be soon subjected by him.

Peace is to Churches as Walls to Cities; nay, Unity hath defended Cities that had no Walls; it was once demanded of Agesilaus, why Lacedaemon had no Walls; he answers (pointing back to the City) That the Concord of the Citizens was the strength of the City. In like manner, Christians are strong when united, then they are more capable to resist temptation, and to succour such as are tempted; when Unity and Peace is among the

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Churches,



*2 Samuel 13th.* Two are better than one,  
 because if one fall, the other may raise  
 him up; then surely twenty are better than  
 ten, and an hundred are better than  
 twenty, for the same reason, because they  
 are more capable to help one another.  
 If ever Christians would do any thing to  
 raise up the fall'n Tabernacles of Jacob,  
 and to strengthen the weak, and com-  
 fort the feeble, and to fetch back those  
 that have gone astray, it must be by  
 Unity. *We read of the Men of Babel,* Gen. 11.  
*The Lord said, Behold, the People are  
 one, &c. And now nothing will be re-  
 strained from them that they have imagined  
 to do.* We learn by Reason what great things  
 may be done in worldly Achievements  
 where Unity is: And shall not Reason  
 assisted with the Motives of Religion  
 teach us, that Unity among Christians  
 may enable them to enterprize greater  
 Things for Christ? would not this make  
 Satan fall from Heaven like Lightning?  
 As Unity built literal Babel, it's Uni-  
 ty that must pull down mystical Babel.  
 And on the other hand, where Divisions  
 are,

are, there is Confusion; by this means a *Babel* hath been built in every Age. It hath been observed by a Learned Man, and I wish I could not say truly observed, That there is most of *Babel* and confusion among those that cry out most against it.

Would we have a Hand to destroy *Babylon*, let's have a Heart to unite one among another.

Our English Histories tell us, that after *Austin* the Monk had been some time in *England*, that he heard of some of the Remains of the British Christians, which he conven'd to a place, which *Camden* in his *Britannia* calls *Austin's Oak*; here they met to consult about Matters of Religion; but such was their Division, by reason of *Austin's* imposing Spirit, that our Stories tell us, *That Synod was only famous for this, that they only met and did Nothing.* This is the mischief of Divisions, they hinder the doing of much good; and if Christians, that are divided, be ever famous for any thing, it will be, that they have often met together, and talked of this and the other thing, but they did nothing.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Where Unity and Peace is wanting, there the Weak are wounded; and the Wicked are hardened: Unity may well be compared to *precious Oil*, *Psal. 133. 2.* It's the nature of Oil, to heal that which is wounded, and to soften that which is hard. Those Men that have hardened themselves against God and his People, when they shall behold Unity and Peace among them, will say, God is in them indeed. And on the other hand, are they not ready to say, when they see you divided, *That the Devil's in you that you cannot agree?*

Fifthly, Divisions, and want of Peace, keep those out of the Church that would come in; and cause many to go out that are in.

'The Divisions of Christians (as a Learned Man observes) are a Scandal to the Jews, an Opprobrium to the Gentiles, and an Inlet to Atheism and Infidelity. Infomuch that our Controversies about Religion (especially as they have been of late managed) have made Religion it self become a Controversy.

verly. O then, how good and pleasant  
 a thing is it for Brethren to dwell toge-  
 ther in Unity. The Peace and Unity  
 that was among the Primitive Christi-  
 ans, drew others to them. What hin-  
 dered the Conversion of the Jews, but the  
 Divisions of Christians. Must I be a  
 Christian, says the Jew, what Christi-  
 an must I be, of what Sect must I be  
 of? The Jews (as one observes) glo-  
 ring upon that Text in *Isa. 1. 6.* where  
 it is prophesied, *This shall the Lion and the  
 Ass shall lie down together, and the  
 Ass shall be none left to hurt nor destroy in  
 all Gods Holy Mountain;* they inter-  
 preting these Sayings, to signify the  
 Concord and Peace that shall be among  
 the People that shall own the *Messiah*,  
 do from hence conclude, that the *Messiah*  
 is not yet come, because of the Con-  
 temptions and Divisions that are among  
 those that profess him. And the Apo-  
 stle saith, *1 Cor. 14. 23.* That if an Un-  
 believer should see their Disorders, he  
 would say they were mad; but where  
 Unity and Peace is, there the Churches  
 are multiplied; we read, *Acts 9.* that  
 when the Churches had rest, they mul-  
 tiplied.



applied. And, 2dly, as 45. 4. 7. when the  
 Church was suffering God would send  
 cords round about her, and she was daily  
 in trouble, and in danger of being  
 - off by the Unity brings Men into the  
 Church, and Divisions keep them out.  
 It is reported of an Indian passing by  
 the House of a Christian, and hearing  
 them contending, being desired to turn  
 in, he refused, saying, *Habamack* dwells  
 there, meaning, that the Devil dwells  
 there: but where Unity and Peace is,  
 there God dwells, and he that dwells in  
 Love, dwells in God. The Apostle  
 tells the *Corinthians*, That if they wal-  
 ked orderly, even the Unbeliever would  
 hereby be enforced to come and wor-  
 ship; and say, God was in them indeed.  
 And was read, *Zech. 8. 23.* of a Time  
 when ten Men shall take hold of a Jew,  
 and say, *We will go with you, for we have*  
*heard that God is with you.* And hence it is that Christ prays,  
*John 17. 21.* That his Disciples might be  
 one, as the Father, and be with one, that the  
 World might believe the Father sent him.  
 As if he should say, you may preach  
 as long as you will, and to little  
 purpose,

purpose if you are not in Peace and Unity among your selves. Such was the Unity of Christians in former days; that the intelligent Heathen would say of them, That though they had many Bodies, yet they had but one Soul. And we read the State of them, *Acts 4. 32* *That the multitude of them that believed were of one Heart and one Soul, and they were*

And as the Learned *Stillingsfleet* observes in his *Ironiques*; 'The Unity and Peace that was then among Christians, made Religion amiable in the Judgment of Impartial Heathens. Christians were then known by the benignity and sweetness of their Dispositions, by the candour and ingenuity of their Spirits, by their mutual Love, Forbearance, and Condescension to one another. But either this is not the practice of Christianity; (*viz. a Duty that Christians are now bound to observe*) or else it is not calculated for our Meridian, where the Spirits of Men are of too high an elevation for it; for if Pride and Uncharitableness, if Divisions and Strifes, if Wrath and Envy, if Antipathies and Contentions

one

ons were but the Marks of true Christians, *Diogenes* need never light his Lamp at noon to find out such among us; but if a Spirit of Meekness, Gentleness, and Condescension; if a stooping to the Weaknesses and Infirmities of one another, if pursuit after Peace, when it flies from us, be the indispensable Duties, and characteristical Notes of Christians, it may possibly prove a difficult Inquest to find out such; for the crouds of those that shelter themselves under that glorious Name.

It is the Unity and Peace of Churches that brings others to them, and makes Christianity amiable. What is prophesied of the Church of the Jews, may in this case be applied to the Gentile Church, *Isa. 66. 12.* That when once God extends Peace to her like a River, the Gentiles shall come in like a flowing Stream; then (and not till then) the Glory of the Lord shall arise upon his Churches; and his Glory shall be seen among them; then shall their Hearts fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the Nations shall be converted to them.

Sixthly,

one were but the Marks of true Christianity. Surely, a want of Unity and Peace keeps a host out of the Church, that would otherwise contribute to the growth of the Christian in his heart and mind. Divisions, wranglings, and Prejudices, eat out the Growth, if not the Life of Religion. These are those Waters of Mar, that smother the Spirit, and quench the Spirit of God, and bring in the Peace in fact to be like the Dew of Mar, and as a Flood that is defended upon a dry, where the Lord commanded his Blessing, *Peace be to you and to all that love the Unity and Peace of the Church.* It is the Unity and Peace of the Church, that is the Unity and Peace of the Church, and the Unity and Peace of the Church, that is the Unity and Peace of the Church. Divisions, and Contentions, and Parties, and Divisions, are to the Church like Wars in Countries. Where Wars is, the Ground both waste and shrill'd; none takes care of it. It is Love that edifieth, but Division pulleth down. Divisions are as the North-east Wind, to the Fruit, which causeth them to dwindle away to nothing; but when the Storms are over, every thing begins to grow. When Men are divided, they seldom speak the Truth in Love; and then no marvel they grow not up to him in all things, which is the Mark.



learning, and are yet so far from attaining the knowledge of the Truth: Some have given one Reason, and some another: some say Pride is the cause, and others say Covetousness is the cause: I with could say these were no causes: but observe, that when God entered his Controversy with his People of old, he mainly insisted upon some one Sin as Idolatry, and Shedding Innocent Blood: &c. as comprehensive of the rest: not but that they were guilty of other Sins, but those that were the most capital are particularly insisted on: in like manner, whoever would but take a review of Churches that live in Contentions and Divisions, may easily find that breach of Unity and Charity is their capital Sin, and the occasion of all other Sins. No marvel then, that the Scripture saith the whole Law is fulfilled in Love; and if so, then where Love is wanting, it must needs follow, the whole Law is broken. It is where Love grows cold that Sin abounds: and therefore the want of Unity and Peace is the cause of that Jealousy and barranels time among us. It is true in Spirituals, we

Temporals; That Peace brings Plen-

Seventhly; Where Unity and Peace is wanting, our Prayers are hindered: The Promise is, that what we shall agree to ask, shall be given us of our Heavenly Father: No marvel we pray and pray, and yet are not answered, it is because we are not agreed what to have.

It's reported, that the People in *Le-monia*, coming to make Supplications to their Idol God, some of them asked for Rain, and others of them asked for fair Weather: The Oracle returns them this Answer, That they should go first and agree among themselves: Would a Heathen God refuse to answer such Prayers, in which the Supplicants were not agreed; and shall we think the True God will answer them?

We see then that Divisions hinder our Prayers, and lay a prohibition on our Sacrifice: If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, (saith Christ) and there remember that thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave thy Gift, and go, and first



first begethided by the Brotherly Love  
 come and offer it: So that want of Unity  
 and Charity hinders even our particular  
 Prayers and Elevations. *W. v. l. i. c. v. 2*  
 This hindered the Prayers and Fasting  
 of the People of old from finding ac-  
 ceptance in Gods eyes. *Ex. viii. 1.* Peoples are  
 the Reason wherefore they fasted, and  
 God did not see nor make notice  
 thereof. He gives this Reason, because  
 they fasted for Strife and Debates, and  
 hid their Face from their own Bless-  
 ings. *Ex. viii. 1.* Again, *Ex. viii. 1.* the  
 Lord said, I will not accept of their  
 fasts, for his Enemies shall be in the  
 midst of them, and their God shall be  
 separated from them, and among their  
 many Sins they shall chargeable be  
 with the name of the Lord. *Ex. viii. 1.*  
 The reason of this is, because their  
 hearts were not true, and they were  
 were hindered, both hindered the Old  
 and New Testament. *Ex. viii. 1.*  
 no this sacrifice of the People in the  
 year of Jubilee, that said, *Ex. viii. 1.*  
 off, that is, that the Lord should be  
 the Master of the Lord. On the other  
 hand, we read their acceptable Prayer

Prayers were that were made with one accord. *Acts 1. 4.* compared with *verse 2.* they prayed with one accord, and they were all of one Heart, and of one Soul: and see the benefit of it, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spoke the Word with all boldness. Which was the very thing they prayed for, as appears *verse 29.* And the Apostle exhorteth the Husband to dwell with his Wife, that their Prayers might not be hindered. *1 Pet. 3. 7.* We see then want of Unity and Peace, either in Families or Churches, is a hindrance of Prayers.

Eighthly; It is a dishonour, and disparagement to Christ, that his Family should be divided: When an Army falls into Mutiny and Division, it reflects disparagement on him that hath the Conduct of it: In like manner the Divisions of Families are a dishonour to the Heads, and those that govern them. And if so, then how greatly do we dishonour our Lord and Governor, who gave his Body to be broken, to keep his Church from breaking, who

prayed

prayed for their Peace and Unity, and left Peace at his departing from them for a Legacy, even a Peace which the World could not bestow upon them.

Ninthly; Where there is Peace and Unity, there is a Sympathy with each other; that which is the want of one, will be the want of all; Who is afflicted, (saith the Apostle) and I burn not? we should then remember them that are in Bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer Adversity, as being our selves of the Body, Heb. 13. 3. But where the Body is broken, or Men are not reckoned or esteemed of the Body, no marvel we are so little affected with such as are afflicted: Where Divisions are, that which is the Joy of the one, is the Grief of another; but where Unity, and Peace, and Charity abounds, there we shall find Christians in Mourning with them that mourn, and rejoicing with them that rejoice; then they will not envy the Prosperity of others, nor secretly rejoice at the Miseries or Miscarriages of any.

Laſt

Last of all ; I now come to give you Twelve Directions and Motives for the obtaining Peace and Unity.

First ; If ever we would live in Peace and Unity, we must pray for it. We are required to seek *Peace* : Of whom then can we seek it with expectation to find it, but of him who is a God of *Peace*, and hath promised to bless his People with *Peace* ? It is God that hath promised to give his People one Heart, and one Way ; yet for all these things, he will be sought unto : O then let us seek *Peace*, and pray for *Peace*, because God shall prosper them that love it.

The *Peace* of Churches is that which the Apostle prays for in all his Epistles ; in which his desire is, that *Grace* and *Peace* may be multiplied and increased among them.

Secondly ; They that would endeavour the *Peace* of the Churches, must be careful who they commit the care and oversight of the Churches to ; as, first, over and besides those Qualifications

H

that

that should be in all Christians) they that rule the Church of God, should be Men of Counsel and Understanding, where there is an ignorant Ministry, there is commonly an ignorant People, according as it was of old, *Like Priest, like People.*

How sad is it to see the Church of God committed to the care of such that pretend to be Teachers of others, that understand not what they say, or whereof they affirm. No marvel the Peace of Churches is broken, when their Watchmen want skill to preserve their Unity, which of all other Things is as the Church's Walls: when they are divided, no wonder they crumble to Atoms, if there is no skilful Physician to heal them. It's sad when there is no Balm in Gilead, and when there is no Physician there. Hence it is, that the Wounds of Churches become incurable, like the Wounds of God's People of old, either not healed at all, or else slightly healed, and to no purpose. May it not be said of many Churches at this day, as God said of the Church of Israel, *That be Joughe for a Man among them that should have*

in the Gap, and make up the Breach, but  
he found none?

Remember what was said of old,  
Mal. 2. 7. The Priest's Lips should pre-  
serve Knowledge; and the People should  
seek the Law at his Mouth: But when this  
is wanting, the People will be stumbling  
and departing from God and one ano-  
ther; therefore God complains, Hos.

4. 6. That his People were destroyed for  
want of Knowledge; that is, for want of  
knowing Guides; for if the Light that  
is in them that teach, be Darkness, how  
great is that Darkness? And if the  
Blind lead the Blind, no marvel both  
fall into the Ditch.

How many are there that take upon  
them to teach others, that had need be  
taught in the beginning of Religion,  
that instead of multiplying Knowledge,  
multiply Words without Knowledge;  
and instead of making known God's  
Counsels, darken Counsel by Words  
without Knowledge? The Apostle speaks  
of some that did more than darken  
Counsel, for they wrested the Counsel  
of God; 2 Pet. 3. 16. In Paul's Epis-  
tles (saith he) are some things hard to



be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Some things in the Scripture are hard to be known, and they are made harder by such unlearned Teachers, as utter their own Notions by Words without Knowledge.

None are more bold and adventurous to take upon them to expound the dark Mysteries and Sayings of the Prophets and Revelations, and the 9th of the Romans, which I believe contains some of those many things which in Paul's Epistles, Peter saith, were hard to be understood. I say, none are more forward to dig in these Mines, than those that can hardly give a sound Reason for the first Principles of Religion; and such as are ignorant of many more weighty things, that are easily to be seen in the Face and Superficies of the Scripture; nothing will serve these but swimming in the Deeps, when they have not yet learned to wade through the Shallows of the Scriptures: Like the Ghosticks of old, who thought they knew all Things, though they knew nothing as they ought



to know. And as those Gnosticks did of old, so do such Teachers of late break the Unity and Peace of Churches. How needful then is it, that if we desire the Peace of Churches, that we chuse out Men of Knowledg, who may be able to keep them from being shattered and scattered with every Wind of Doctrine. And who may be able to convince and stop the Mouths of Gainsayers?

Secondly; You must not only chuse Men of Counsel; but if you would design the Unity and Peace of the Churches, you must chuse Men of courage to govern them; for as there must be Wisdom to bear with some, so there must be Courage to correct others; as some must be instructed meekly, so others must be rebuked sharply, that they may be sound in the Faith; there must be Wisdom to rebuke some with long-suffering, and there must be Courage to suppress and stop the Mouths of others. The Apostle tells *Titus* of some whole Mouths must be stop'd, or else they would subvert whole Houses, *Ti.*

1. 11. Where this Courage hath been wanting, not only whole Houſes, but whole Churches have been ſubverted. And Paul tells the Galatians, That when he ſaw ſome endeavour to bring the Churches into Bondage, that he did not give place to them, no, not for an hour, &c. Gal. 2. 5. If this courſe had been taken by the Rulers of Churches, their Peace had not been ſo often invaded by unruly and vain Talkers.

Thirdly; In chuſing Men to rule (if you would endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit, and the Bond of Peace thereby) be careful you chule Men of peaceable Diſpoſitions. That which hath much annoyed the Peace of Churches, hath been the froward and perverſe Spirits of the Rulers thereof: Solomon therefore adviſeth, That with a furious Man we ſhould not go, leſt we learn his Ways, and get a Share to our Souls, Prov. 22. 24, 25. and with the Froward we learn frowardneſs. How do ſome Mens words eat like a Canker; who inſtead of lifting up their Voice like a Trumpet, to ſound a Parley for Peace, have

have rather founded an Alarum to War and Contention. If ever we would live in Peace, let's reverence the Feet of them that bring the glad-Tidings of

O how have some Men made it their Business to preach Contentions, and upon their entertainment of every novel Opinion, to preach Separation! How hath God's Word been stretched and torn, to furnish these Men with Arguments to tear Churches! Have not our Ears heard those Texts, that saith, *Come out from among them, and be separate, &c.* and, *withdraw from every Brother that walks disorderly?* I say, have we not heard these Texts, that were written to prevent Disorder, brought to countenance the greatest Disorder that ever was in the Church of God, even Schism and Division? whereas one of these Exhortations was written to the Church of *Corinth*, to separate themselves from the Idol's Temple, and the Idol's Table, in which many of them lived in the participation of, notwithstanding their profession of the True God; as appears 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17. [compared

with 1 Cor. 8. 7. and 1 Cor. 10. 14, 20, 22, recites. And not for some few or more Members, who shall make themselves both Judges and Parties, to make Separation, when and as often as they please, from the whole Congregation and Church of God where they stood related; for by the same Rule, and upon the same Ground, may others start some new Question among these new Separatists, and become their own Judges of the communicableness of them, and thereupon make another Separation from these, till at last two be not left to walk together. And for that other Text mentioned 2 Thess. 3. 9. where Paul exhorts the Church of Thessalonica to withdraw themselves from every Brother that walks disorderly; I cannot but wonder that any should bring this to justify their separation, or withdrawing from the Communion of a true (though a disorderly) Church. For

1. Consider, that this was not writ for a few Members to withdraw from the Church, but for the Church to withdraw from disorderly Members.

2. Con-

2. Consider, that if any offended Members, upon pretence of Error, either in Doctrine or Practice, should by this Text become Judges (as well as Parties) of the Grounds and Lawfulness of their Separation. Then it will follow, that half a Score notorious Hereticks, or scandalous Livers (when they have walked so as they foresee the Church are ready to deal with them, and withdraw from them) shall anticipate the Church, and pretend somewhat against them, of which themselves must be Judges, and so withdraw from the Church, pretending either Heresy or Disorder; and so condemn the Church, to prevent the disgrace of being condemned by the Church. How needful then is it, that Men of peaceable Dispositions, and not of forward and factious, and dividing Spirits, be chose to rule the Church of God, for fear lest the whole Church be leavened and sower'd by them.

Fourthly; As there must be care used in chusing Men to rule the Church of God, so there must be a consideration

had, that there are many things darkly laid down in Scripture, this will temper our spirits and make us live in Peace and Unity the more firmly in things in which we agree; this will help us to bear one another's Burden, and so fulfil the Law of Christ, in as much as all things necessary to Salvation and Church-Communion are plainly laid down in Scripture. And where things are more darkly laid down, we should consider that God intended hereby to stir up our diligence; that thereby we might increase our Knowledge, and not our Divisions; for it may be said of all Discoveries of Truth we have made in the Scriptures, as it's said of the Globe of the Earth, that though Men have made great Searches, and thereupon great Discoveries, yet there is still a *terra incognita*, an unknown Land; so there is in the Scriptures, for after Men have travelled over them, one Age after another yet still there is, as it were, a *terra incognita*, an unknown Tract to put us upon farther search and enquiry, and to keep us from censuring and falling out with those who have not yet made



made the same Discoveries; that so we may say with the Psalmist, when we reflect upon our short apprehensions of the Mind of God, that we have seen an end of all Perfections, but God's Commands are exceeding broad; and as one observes, speaking of the Scriptures, that there is a Path in them leading to the Mind of God, which lieth a great distance from the Thoughts and Apprehensions of Men. And on the other hand, in many other places, God sits, as it were, on the Superficies, and the Face of the Letter, where he that runs may discern him speaking plainly, and no Parable at all. How should the consideration of this induce us to a peaceable deportment towards those that differ?

Fifthly; If we would endeavour Peace and Unity, we must consider how God hath tempered the Body, that so the comely Parts should not separate from the uncomely, as having no need of them, 1 Cor. 12. 22, 23, 24, 25. There is in Christ's Body and House, some Members and Vessels less honourable,



## An Exhortation

He, 2 Tim. 2. 20. And therefore we should not, as some now a-days do, pour the more abundant disgrace, instead of putting the more abundant honour upon them: Did we but consider this, we should be covering the Weakness, and hiding the Miscarriages of one another, because we are all Members one of another, and the most useless Member in his place is useful.

Sixthly: If we would live in Peace, let us remember our Relations to God, as Children to a Father, and to each other as Brethren. Will not the thoughts that we have one Father, quiet us, and the thoughts that we are Brethren, unite us? It was this, that made Abraham propose Terms of Peace to Lot, Gen. 13. *Let there be no Strife* (saith he) *between us, for we are Brethren.* And we read of Moses, in Acts 7. 26. using this Argument, to reconcile those that strove together, and to set them at one again; *See, saith he, you are Brethren, why do ye wrong one another?* A deep sense of this Relation, that we are Brethren, would keep us from dividing.

Seventhly,

Seventhly; If we would preserve Peace, let us mind the Gifts, and Graces, and Vertues that are in each other; let these be more in our eye, than their Failings and Imperfections. When the Apostle exhorted the *Philippians* to Peace, as a means hereunto, that so the Peace of God might rule in their Hearts, he tells them, *Chap. 4. 8.* that *if there were any Vertue, or any Praise, they should think of these things.* While we are always talking and blazoning the Faults of one another, and spreading their Infirmities, no marvel we are so little in Peace, and Charity; for as Charity covereth a multitude of Sins, so Malice covereth a multitude of Vertues, and makes us deal by one another, as the Heathen Persecutors dealt with Christians, (*viz.*) put them in Bears Skins, that they might the more readily become a Prey to those Dogs that were designed to devour them.

Eighthly; If we would keep Unity and Peace, let us lay aside provoking and dividing Language, and forgive these

those that use them. Remember that old Saying, *Evil Words corrupt good Manners*. When Men think to carry all afore them, with Speaking uncharitably and disgracefully of their Brethren, or their Opinions; may not such be answered, as Job answered his unfriendly Visitants, *Job 6. 23. How forcible are right Words? But what do your Arguings reprove?* How healing are words fitly spoken? *A word in season, how good is it?* If we would seek Peace, let us cloath all our Treaties for Peace with acceptable words; and where one word may better accommodate than another, let that be used to express Persons or Things by; and let us not, as some do, call the different Practices of our Brethren, Will-worship, and their different Opinions, Doctrines of Devils, and the Doctrine of *Balgam*, who taught Fornication, &c. unless we can plainly, and in expressness of Terms prove it so; such Language as this hath strangely divided our Spirits, and hardened our Hearts one towards another.

Ninthly;

Ninthly; If we would live in Peace let us make the best constructions of one another's Words and Actions. Charity judgeth the best, and it thinks no evil; if Words and Actions may be construed to a good fence, let us never put a bad construction upon them: How much hath the Peace of Christians been broken by an uncharitable Interpretation of Words and Actions? as some lay to the charge of others, that which they never said; so by straining Mens Words, others lay to their charge, that they never thought.

Tenthly, Be willing to hear, and learn, and obey those that God by his Providence hath set over you; this is a great means to preserve the Unity and Peace of Churches: but when Men (yea, and sometimes Women) shall usurp Authority, and think themselves wiser than their Teachers, no wonder if these People run into Contentions and Parties, when any shall say they are not free to hear those whom the Church thinks fit to speak to them: This is the first step

to

to Schism, and is usually attended, if not timely prevented, with a sinful Separation.

Eleventhly; If you would keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, be mindful, that the God, whom you serve, is a God of Peace, and your Saviour is a Prince of Peace, and that his Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all his Paths are Peace; and that Christ was sent into the World, to give Light to them that sit in Darkness, and in the shadow of Death, and to guide our Feet in the Way of Peace.

Twelfthly; Consider the oneness of Spirit that is among the Enemies of Religion; though they differ about other things, yet to persecute Religion, and extirpate Religion out of the earth, here they will agree; the Devils in the Air, and the Devils in the Earth, all the Devils in Hell, and in the World, make one at this turn. Shall the Devil's Kingdom be united, and shall Christ's be divided? Shall the Devils make one show to drive on the design of damning Men,

## to Peace and Unity. 61

Men, and shall not Christians unite to carry on the great Design of saving of them? Shall the Papists agree and unite to carry on their Interest, notwithstanding the multitudes of Orders, Degrees and Differences there are among them, and shall not those that call themselves Reformed Churches, unite, to carry on the common Interest of Christ in the World, notwithstanding some petty and disputable Differences that are among them? *Quarrels about Religion* (as one observes) *were Sins not named among the Gentiles.* What a shame is it then, for Christians to abound in them, especially considering the nature of Christian Religion, and what large provisions the Author of it hath made, to keep the Professors of it in Peace? Inasmuch (as one well observes) *It is next to a miracle, that ever any* (especially the Professors of it) *should fall out about it.*

Thirteenthly; Consider and remember, That the Judge stands at the door; let this moderate our Spirits, that the Lord is at hand. What a sad account will they have to make when he comes, that shall



shall be found to unite their Fellow Ser-  
 vants; and to make the way to his King-  
 dom more narrow than ever he made  
 it? Let me close all in the words of that  
 great Apostle, *2 Cor. xiii. 14.* Finally, Bre-  
 thren, *farewell; be perfect, be of good com-  
 fort, be of one mind, live in peace, and  
 the God of love and peace shall be with  
 you.* carry on the common Interest of Christ  
 in the World, notwithstanding some  
 petty and disputable Differences that are  
 among them? *Q. What about Religion?* (as  
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 taken, than to be wrong* (especially the Pro-  
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 Lord is at hand. What a sad account will  
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 shall



## POSTSCRIPT.

**R** Eader, I thought good to advertise thee, that I have delivered this to thy Hand, in the same Order and Method in which it was preached, and almost in the same words, without any diminishings, or considerable Enlargings, unless it be in the thirteen last Particulars; upon some of which I have made some enlargements, which I could not then do for want of time; but the substance of every one of them was then laid down in the same particular order as here thou hast them; and now I have done, I make no other account (to use the words of a moderate Man upon the like Occasion) but it will fall out with me, as doth commonly with him that parts a Fray, both Parties may perhaps drive at me for wishing them no worse than peace: My ambition of the publique Tranquillity of the Church

Church of God, I hope will carry me through these hazards, let both beat me, so their Quarrels may cease, I shall rejoyce in those Blows and Scars I shall take for the Church's safety.

**V A L E.**  
I thought good to advertise thee, that I have delivered this thy Hand, in the same Order and Method in which it was preached, and almost in the same words without any diminution, or considerable Enlargings; unless it be in the ancient Latin Particulars; upon some of which I have made some enlargements, which I could not then do for want of time but the substance of every one of them was then laid down in the same particular order as here thou hast them; and now I have done, I make no other account (to the words of a moderate Man upon the like Occasion) but it will fall out with me, as doth commonly with him that parts a fray, both parties may perhaps drive at me for wounding them no worse than peace: My ambition of the public Tranquillity of the Church

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